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Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG  
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru  
Welsh Ambulance Services  
University NHS Trust

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHARITY COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2026 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
Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director

#### PRESCRIBED ATTENDANCE:

Lee Brooks	Executive Director of Operations ( <i>joined at 10:45am, Item 7</i> )
Andrew Cotton	Fundraising and Communications Officer
Matt Dugdale	Head of Commercial
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
David Hopkins	Head of Charity
Jo Kelso	Head of Workforce Education and Development
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Hugh Parry	Trade Union Partner
Liz Rogers	Deputy Director of People and Culture
Leanne Smith	Assistant Director of Digital
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine
Chris Turley	Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Damon Turner	Trade Union Partner

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Harland	Corporate Governance Officer
Jackie Hatton-Bell	Volunteer Steering Group Member
Michelle Morgan	Business Support Officer ( <i>Item 6 only</i> )
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager
Ed Roberts	Interim Assistant Director of Finance

#### APOLOGIES:

Julie Boalch	Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Risk
Marcus Viggers	Trade Union Partner

## OPENING ITEMS

### 1. APOLOGIES AND QUORUM

- 1.1 Apologies from Julie Boalch and Marcus Viggers were noted. It was also noted that Trade Union representatives were in attendance virtually. Quorum was confirmed.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1. There were no other declarations of interest recorded.

### 3.1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 2 OCTOBER 2025

- 3.1.1 Jackie Hatton-Bell noted a minor amendment to item 37/25, to read CWR (not CFR). Subject to this change, the minutes of the Charity Committee held on 2 October 2025 meeting were received and approved.

### 3.2. RATIFICATION OF THE CHAIR'S ACTION [EXPENDITURE REQUEST FROM BIDS PANEL 6 NOVEMBER 2025]

- 3.2.1 The committee approved a bid for charitable funds applied for through the Bids Panel by Chair's Action on the 6 November 2025. This request was dealt with via this mechanism as the funds were required before the January 2026 meeting of the Committee.
- 3.2.2 The funding request was for the provision of Christmas dinners, festive food and refreshments for staff and volunteers working over the Christmas period. The application was for a total sum of £18,700, which was approved by Members. The papers issued with the Chair's Action are annexed to this report.

**The Committee: Ratified the decision made by the Chair's Action on 6 November 2025 for the approval of charitable funds to the value of £18,700.**

### 3.3 HIGHLIGHT REPORT: 2 OCTOBER 2025

- 3.3.1 The Highlight Report from the 2 October 2025 was noted.

#### 4. ACTION LOG

- 4.1 The Action Log was received and discussed:  
*Action 43/25 2 October 2025 Charity Committee Cycle of Business*  
*Ed Roberts and Jess Price to update the Committee on the reserves policy position. This action relates to action 07/25 generated at the April 2025 committee.* The Committee agreed that Chris Turley would discuss this matter with Ed Roberts and the Committee Chair to pragmatically address this action, with the intention to clarify the reserves policy and ensure optimal investment arrangements for the Charity.

#### ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE, DISCUSSION OR APPROVAL

#### 5. CHARITY ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION REPORT FROM AUDIT WALES FOR 2024/25

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

- 5.1 The Charity accounts for 2024/25 received an unamended and unqualified independent examination opinion. These amounts were largely anticipated and planned and were reported to have been a £66.8K income during the year; £246.k expenditure during the year and a net COIF investment loss of £5.5k. This resulted in a net movement in funds of £185k and a prior period adjustment of £8.4k.
- 5.2 The timeline for final sign-off was confirmed by Audit Wales, with certification by the Auditor General for Wales arranged for after approval by the Corporate Trustee meeting; and reassurance was given that the Charity Commission filing deadline would be met. The committee endorsed the Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 for approval by the Corporate Trustee on the 29 January 2026.

## **6. BIDS PANEL LIVED EXPERIENCE: MICHELLE MORGAN, BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER (OPERATIONS)/FUNDRAISER FOR WAST CHARITY**

- 6.1 Michelle Morgan presented her personal journey of taking up running in early 2024, progressing from being unable to run 200 meters to completing a half marathon and raising over £335 in aid of the WAST charity. She described how joining Parkrun and a local running club significantly improved her confidence, well-being, and social connections, and how she became an ambassador for 5K Your Way race, supporting others in recovery. Michelle highlighted the positive impact of these activities on her physical and mental health, as well as her increased confidence and productivity at work.
- 6.2 In the subsequent discussion, committee members commended Michelle's achievements and explored ways to encourage wider staff participation in charity and well-being activities, suggesting improved communication, leveraging existing staff networks, and integrating charity promotion with broader well-being initiatives. The committee recognised the value of staff-led fundraising and the importance of supporting and amplifying such efforts across the organisation.

## **7. CHARITY DELIVERY PLAN – UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

- 7.1 The committee was updated on progress against the Charity Delivery Plan approved in July 2025. The committee were assured that 27 of the 39 tasks in the plan have either been completed or are on schedule to be completed. Of the eight tasks that have been rescheduled, five of these are due to the delayed appointment of the Charity's Fundraising and Communications Officer and are due to be completed by March 2026. A refresh of the plan will be presented in July 2026.
- 7.2 The committee was assured by the continued positive progress against the Charity Delivery Plan, with clear mitigation in place for the rescheduled items. There was discussion regarding the priorities with regards to use of charitable funds and acknowledgement of the importance of stakeholder engagement. David Hopkins acknowledged the need for a clear process for confirming priorities going forward and suggested further discussions to identify other fundable projects which align with the Charity's strategic objectives.

7.3 The committee considered the balance of using charitable fundraising against the Charity's sustainability with regards to the funding of the dedicated positions – the Head of Charity and the Fundraising and Communications Officer. Estelle Hitchon advised that there are ongoing conversations regarding the future funding arrangements which will be progressed by management. The committee were assured by the update given on the Charity Delivery Plan progress update.

## 8. CHARITY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

- 8.1 The committee was assured with respect to performance against grants and learnings taken from application of grant funding. Further grant opportunities were highlighted. The report highlights were included in the report. It was noted that NHS Charities Together has shifted from providing allocated pandemic-related funds to a more competitive grant process, with reduced funding available. Future funding from NHS Charities Together will require stronger, more competitive bids, and the charity must be agile in seeking alternative funding opportunities.
- 8.2 The Charity was successful in being awarded grants from NHS Charities Together of £142K as part of the Community Resilience Fund, and £15,823 as part of the Greener Communities Fund. The £142K will support the Trust's work on cardiac arrest response, particularly focused on improving ROSC (return of spontaneous circulation) rates in areas of health inequality; whilst the £15,823 will fund a new project to create a new green space at Ty Elwy, designed to improve staff wellbeing and biodiversity on the site.
- 8.3 Fundraising during the quarter has included our volunteers collecting at the two performances of Sleeping Beauty, staff running the Cardiff 10K and half marathons, and a family's fundraising efforts with the Wish ambulance in memory of their late mother, Karen Schiebe.
- 8.4 The committee noted that there is a review ongoing of the updated Code of Fundraising Practice by colleagues to ensure compliance with its requirements; and that David Hopkins is reviewing the updated Charity Governance Code with Trish Mills, to consider its provisions and applicability with the WAST Charity. Members were assured as to the Charity's performance in regard to grant use and fundraising activities, and on the key risks and mitigations in place for the Charity's active NHSCT grants.

## **9. CHARITY FUNDS FINANCE UPDATE**

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

- 9.1 Members noted that the balance of funds held as of 30 November 2025 is £840,622 comprised of £217,971 unrestricted funds; £186,959 in designated funds; and £435,692 in restricted funds. Between 01 April 2025 and 30 November 2025, the unit price of the charity's investments has increased by 2.26% resulting in an overall small gain of .c£6. The charity currently holds 1,090.14 units at a unit price of £257.6636, giving a total market value of c£280k.
- 9.2 The committee recognised that the low level of investment returns reflected the low risk appetite and long-term nature of the investments. The committee considered it appropriate for management to continue discussions regarding the Charity's investment and reserves policy outside of the committee forum. The position with regards to the use of charitable funds for the future financing of the Head of Charity and Fundraising Officer posts was noted and the committee acknowledged that this matter would be progressed by the Executive. The committee were assured of the position given on the Charity finances.

## **10. CHARITY FINANCIAL PLANS 2026/29**

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

- 10.1 The committee reviewed and endorsed the Charity's income and expenditure plans for 2026-2029, with the 2026-27 budget of £16,140 towards core fundraising costs, delegated to the Head of Charity and recommend them for approval by the Corporate Trustee. These documents will be presented to the Corporate Trustee at its meeting on the 29 January 2026 for approval.

David Hopkins proposed capping the Christmas spend for future years from charitable funds at £10,000, due to last year's £18,700 cost and the need for financial sustainability for such items going forward. Members acknowledged the importance of engagement with staff and the Bids Panel regarding this going forward, as the provision of Christmas dinners is highly valued. The need to consider charitable fund requests against the Charity's strategic objectives was acknowledged.

10.2 The planned in-year deficit for 2026–27 was clarified as a deliberate use of restricted funds rather than an overspend, with language to reflect “net cash outflow” agreed for accuracy. The Committee also noted substantial voluntary fundraising growth, with donations having increased by 108% between October 2024 and September 2025, and the Charity remaining on track to achieve its 2025–26 projection of £43,813, representing a 208% rise compared to 2024–25.

**The Committee:**

- 1. Endorsed the Charity’s expenditure plans for 2026-2027, the Charity’s income forecasts for 2026-2029, and a 2026-27 budget of £16,140 towards core fundraising costs, delegated to the Head of Charity; and**
- 2. Noted that income projections are estimates and there is limited certainty around their achievement, recognising that best efforts will be made to secure them.**

**11. BIDS PANEL EXPENDITURE GUIDANCE**

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

11.1 The Bids Panel Expenditure Guidance was updated to provide clearer, more structured criteria for what is eligible and ineligible for funding, aiming to ensure consistency and transparency for both applicants and decision-makers. The Committee welcomed the guidance, suggested developing a staff-facing FAQ, and discussed the need for flexibility in cases where proposals may benefit patients or staff wellbeing but fall outside strict eligibility.

11.2 The committee considered the appropriateness of using charitable funds to support certain treatment types and the need to ensure the efficacy of treatments was supported by robust clinical evidence. Given this, it was agreed to be important to clarify the usage of the term ‘complementary therapy’ which would clarify the guidance. In addition to this, it was asked that the language within the guidance document be reviewed prior to its finalisation, in line with the conversation held by the committee.

**The Committee: Approved the Bids Panel Expenditure Guidance (v 0.6 for approval) subject to the amendments discussed regarding flexibility of /clarity around eligibility criteria.**

## 12. 2025/26 QUALITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

12.1 The committee held the first part of its 2025/26 Quality Governance Review. No substantive changes were proposed to the Charity committee's terms of reference. The committee is valued for its strong support and scrutiny of the Charity's Delivery Plan, open discussion about achievements and challenges, and high levels of engagement underpinned by good quality papers. Members recognise a growing sense of ambition, and the committee's organisation, including well planned diary dates and timely circulation of papers, contributes to effective and productive meetings.

**The Committee: Noted the wider board Committee framework changes proposed and provide feedback on the recommendations, noted the responses to the annual quality governance review survey, and endorsed the proposed changes to the terms of reference for the Charity Committee for 2026/27.**

## 13. RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

13.1 The committee reviewed the updated Risk Register which included the following risks that relate to the Charity:

- Risk ID **CHAR-003** Lack of compliance with legal and regulatory framework
- Risk ID **CHAR-005** Lack of internal processes and governance structure in place to meet the conditions of grants
- Risk ID **CHAR-008** Failure to raise sufficient funds to deliver the Charity's strategic objectives

13.2 The committee noted that the process has become more rigorous and mature, thanks to the dedicated work of David Hopkins and Julie Boalch. Risks are now clearly identified, with proportionate mitigation actions and regular review, aligning with the Trust's Risk Management standards. The committee also discussed the potential to further develop the Charity's Risk Appetite and Board Assurance Framework, building on the current progress.

#### **14. BIDS PANEL HIGHLIGHT REPORT – 20 OCTOBER 2025 AND 8 DECEMBER 2025**

*The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.*

14.1 The committee noted the Highlight Report, noting that other than the Chair's Action which was ratified above, there were no bids that required the committee's approval.

#### **15. BURSARY PANEL HIGHLIGHT REPORT – 9 JANUARY 2026**

15.1 Jo Kelso, Chair of the Bursary Panel, provided a verbal update and advised that the Bursary Panel reconvened on 9 January 2026 after an inquorate meeting in December and reviewed 20 submissions, approving four that fully met the criteria; with one application likely to be funded through an alternative route to maximise individual benefit.

15.2 The Bursary Policy is being refreshed, moving towards guidance similar to the Bids Panel. The Panel aims to encourage applications for activities beyond academic development, broadening the scope for individual benefit.

15.3 A point for further consideration is the way in which funding is balanced between the Bursary and the Bids Panels, noting the high cost of academic courses, the importance of ensuring fairness in tight financial conditions, and the need to sustain funding for broader staff benefits.

15.4 Hugh Parry requested a further discussion with Jo Kelso and David Hopkins regarding the bursaries, expressing concern that it wouldn't be satisfactory for staff if funding for Christmas provisions is reduced while bursaries continue to be awarded to a small number of academic staff, some of whom leave the Trust without providing benefit.

**The Committee: Took assurance from Jo Kelso's verbal update.**

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

#### **16. COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND CYCLE OF BUSINESS MONITORING REPORT 2025/26 – JANUARY 2026 UPDATE**

16.1 The Cycle of Business Monitoring Report was received and noted.

## CLOSING ITEMS

### 17. MEETING REFLECTIONS

- 17.1 The Committee reflected that the meeting was open, productive and constructive, with members valuing the balance between operational detail and strategic oversight. However, it was noted that at points the discussion strayed “too much into the weeds,” focusing more deeply on operational detail than intended for the Committee’s level of scrutiny. This observation, highlighted in the reflections shared by Trish Mills, emphasised the importance of keeping conversation anchored to strategic themes and ensuring the minutes clearly capture the challenge and reassurance provided by Members, rather than a descriptive account of the papers themselves.
- 17.2 Members agreed on the need to streamline reporting to reduce duplication, reinforce the clarity of the assurance narrative, and ensure future agendas and minutes maintain a consistent strategic focus. The Committee considered this a positive step in maturing its governance approach, helping ensure that Non-Executive Directors’ challenge is fully visible and that the key issues, risks and assurances are clearly articulated.

### 18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 18.1 There was no other business discussed.

### 19. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 19.1 The next meeting of the Charity Committee will be held on 2 April 2026 at 9:30am.

**MEETING CLOSE: 13:00**