



Minutes of a Meeting of the Karten Network Board

July 4th, 2024

Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Directors/Trustees present:

Joanne Rees-Proud (Chair)
Rohan Slaughter (Vice-Chair)
David Finch
Paul Doyle
Max Bianconi
Samantha Haddock
Emma Stewart
Julie Moores

Others present:

Dawn Green
Sal Cooke
Martin Pistorius

Minutes:

Pamela Johnson

Apologies:

David Webster
Robert Boyce (no advance apologies)

Karten Centre Focus – St John’s College Inklusion

St John’s were not able to attend the meeting to give their presentation due to an Ofsted inspection. DG made a visit to see Inklusion in June and was impressed with the outputs. They will however be able to attend a future meeting and the project will be included in the next KN newsletter.

3. Declarations of conflicts of interest

- There were no conflicts of interest noted.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

- The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record by those present.

5. Matters arising

- JRP was going to arrange a meeting with Anthony Davis (IKCT Chair) to discuss the Karten Network grant agreement in advance of the next IKCT trustee meeting in mid September (date TBA).

- Risk Register – Policy calendar is not yet complete but work is in progress.
- Social Media – there is a need to talk to Centres about what would be helpful. A paragraph on social media engagement will be going into the next KN newsletter.

6. KN Finances – 2023-24 budget

- The financial position of the year was noted as well within budget. There were no comments noted.

7. IKCT draft budget for 2024-25

- DG stated she aimed to give trustees sight of the proposal for the next financial year, but it was going to be a like for like request.
- The forecast budget will go to IKCT trustees for a decision before the end of September (their new financial year starts 1 Oct).

8. IKCT Grant agreement – verbal update

- DG, JRP and RS have met and discussed in detail the agreement proposal. JRP is to ensure a meeting takes place with IKCT in advance of their next trustee meeting in September, as this item will be included in the IKCT agenda. The grant agreement will then come back to the board for agreement and approval at the November KN board meeting. The IKCT audit will begin in early December so a decision from KN trustees is needed by then.

9. Wider engagement and projects

a. DfE Assistive Technology Competency Framework

- DG stated how delighted she was to be involved in this initiative with the University of Dundee and partners. RS presented slides outlining the key stages (see separate attachment). Due to the General Election being called, progress was halted with the DfE following RS's presentation to DfE Heads in May.
- MB suggested an idea to create an Alexa platform for carers within home care settings to help them find solutions to make activities more inclusive. DG suggested a separate meeting would be useful for discussion of this idea and for interested trustees to contact her. PD suggested there may be a range of AT resources from previous projects that would be useful for this.

b. Assistive Technologist Membership body

- DG provided an update on the benefits of a professional body for Assistive Technologists – a role undertaken across many organisations – to raise standards. Out of discussions with a group working in the field and a subgroup with expertise to take these discussions forward, the last 6 months has seen momentum. The subgroup facilitated by DG comprises Jane Seale, Fil McIntyre and David Hursthouse. The proposal the subgroup have put together will go out for consultation looking at a membership model with 3 categories (names yet to be agreed):

Associate; Member and Expert Member. The proposal will recommend categories and suggest eligibility criteria and competences for individuals to be allocated to the relevant membership category. The initial consultation will take place in September and then a wider launch consultation will take place in November at the [TechAbility Conference 2024](#). DG asked that if anyone would like to be involved in the consultation phase to contact her directly. JRP thanked DG for the update.

c. Working with Policy Connect

DG updated trustees with examples of how KN is widening its reach. By working with Robert McLaren, Director of Policy at the cross party think tank Policy Connect. Robert McLaren visited Portland College in July to see for himself the impact AT can have for people post 16+. MP was Guest of Honour at the Awards Ceremony - his speech was inspirational and struck a chord with those present. RS will attend an event following the State opening of Parliament on 17 July in Westminster and said that the Civil Service have an important role to play and are interested in evidence-based research to support good public policy. KN have a good opportunity here to tell their story to politicians of all parties. DG thanked the IKCT trustees as they have funded some of the research undertaken in this arena, including the current project "ATech in supported employment and the workplace".

d. TechAbility

DG reported this is going strongly with ongoing support from IKCT and Natspec. The service is broad in scope and impactful. DG and RS oversee monitoring and evaluation with Fil McIntyre on a quarterly basis, producing an annual highlights report for IKCT who have supported TechAbility since 2018. There is a need to undertake bespoke visits due to changes predominately in staff. MP's role complements TechAbility support, MP can provide advice and technical support for Centres, which particularly beneficial for smaller organisations hosting Karten Centres. On behalf of IKCT trustees SC thanked everyone and commended the report produced by MP presented at the last IKCT meeting.

10. Karten Network Operational Plan Monitoring

- DG referenced the red points on papers included for information.
- 1.4 negotiations of relationship – no questions or comments.
- 3.3 Special Interest Groups (SIG)- DG reported that there had been an in-person meeting after a lot of hard work to arrange, but there has been limited interest overall. A Smart Home Group was running, but once the Nuvoic ended there was no interest in continuing. DG requested ideas for SIGs. JRP suggested that there may be scope for regional sessions as the travel part may be easier. DG suggested regional is fine if the topic is fairly generic, but this could be done online. DG suggested there could be scope for regional in-person

opportunities where Karten Centres and users come together for a sharing best practice programme. MB stated the feedback from members from the event he had been involved with was very good and it would be good to do this again. SC stated the idea of doing this for service users is important for links to other providers the main benefit being to spread the level of knowledge about the Karten Network and its delivery strengths. MB suggested recording and sharing online KN presentation content (from the start of each meeting), DG stated this would require consent, but it could be explored.

11. Karten Network Development Coordinator update

- DG updated trustees that since the last meeting she had received applications from 8 Centres and all were supported (spreadsheet of projects funded in board papers). Nuvoic equipment returned from Karten Centres was bundled and all the technology has been relocated based on requests received. DG was grateful to MP and thanked him for the work he has done supporting this.
- DG stated that unfortunately the European Project Repair proposal was not successful in attracting funding. The Project leads in the academic institutes involved in the bid were disappointed and are looking for other opportunities. The door has been left open to discuss this in the future.
- DG referred to RS's slides with regard to an update on the University of Dundee partnership project.
- DG stated that visits to Centre are really good most of the time as you leave with a series of actions. Problems usually occur when there has been a staff change - White Lodge Centre was cited as having an ongoing issue. MS will be visiting White Lodge in July on a fact finding visit and to offer onsite support. DG also has good examples of Centres working together e.g. MB and DW's organisation.

12. Technology Advisor Update

- MP's paper was taken as read with no further comments or questions. JRP thanked MP for all his support.

13. Israel Karten Centre Update

- Unfortunately DG had nothing to report likely due to the continuing circumstances in Israel. DG is in touch informally via WhatsApp with Debbie Ben-Tal and has made her aware of Trust grants and deadlines for newsletters articles.

14. AOB

- SC reported that she had had the pleasure of visiting 2 Northern Ireland Karten Centres – Cedar Foundation and Orchardville. She was happy to report activities seen in person back to IKCT.
- DF stated this was his last meeting as he was stepping down as a trustee and gave his thanks to fellow trustees stating his enjoyment and privilege of working with a group of such dedicated people during his



tenure. JRP thanked him for his work on behalf of the Karten Network and trustees.

- Date of next meeting is 14 November 2024.