

**Minutes of a meeting of the Karten Network Board
10.00am–11.23am, Thursday 13 November 2025
Via Microsoft Teams**

Directors/Trustees present:

- Joanne Rees-Proud (Chair)
- Rohan Slaughter
- Julie Mault
- Max Bianconi
- David Webster
- Kayleigh Hunt
- Alison Keeley
- Sam Haddock

Staff present:

- Dawn Green
- Martin Pistorius

Also present:

- Sal Cooke (Link Trustee Ian Karten Charitable Trust)

Apologies:

- Paul Doyle

Absent

- Emma Stewart

1. Welcome and introductions

- JRP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

- Apologies were noted as above.

3. Declarations of Business Interests

- There were no declarations of business interests.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record by those present.

5. Matters arising

- **Surname update on Charity Commission and Companies House:**
 - Dawn confirmed that the update had been completed on the Charity Commission website.
 - Access to Companies House was still being resolved due to authentication code requirements following staff changes; this

was in progress and would be completed as soon as access was restored.

- It was noted that a confirmation statement is due to be filed by 21 November 2025.

- **Engagement with Emily Davis:**

- DG reported that she had held an introductory one-to-one meeting with Emily Davis, new trustee at the Ian Karten Charitable Trust.
- Emily will attend the TechAbility Conference next week to gain a broader understanding of Karten Network centres and assistive technology provision.
- A centre visit will be arranged following Emily's return from maternity leave.

- **Funding panel (Strategy and Delivery Plan):**

- It was noted that the agreed panel had met and outcomes were included in later agenda items.

Items for discussion / decision / approval

6. KN Finances – 2024–2025 final budget position

- DG presented the summary budget position for the year ending 30 September 2025.
- It was noted that this was a significant year due to the Ian Karten Charitable Trust (IKCT) grant agreement being finalised.
- Administrative costs (£72,000 budget) were significantly underspent due to:
 - Efficient working practices
 - A lull in application activity during part of the year
- £113,000 in grants were approved late in the year, creating a small year-end deficit on paper; however, these grants have not yet been paid and expenditure will occur in the current financial year.
- Dawn confirmed that she maintains detailed internal financial records and will work with Godfrey Wilson to ensure accounting systems reflect grant allocations appropriately.
- The Board noted the explanation and expressed reassurance regarding the financial position.

7. Overview of independent financial examination process

- DG outlined the independent examination process (noting a full audit is not required).
- It was noted that fieldwork is scheduled for early December, with draft accounts expected in January and approval planned for the February Board meeting.

8. Fundraising post update (verbal)

- DG reported on progress in recruiting a freelance fundraiser. One candidate interviewed earlier in the year was not deemed suitable due to the level of support that would have been required. Two strong expressions of interest were received through networks; one candidate subsequently withdrew due to capacity.
- An interview with the remaining candidate is scheduled, and the Board expressed hope that this would lead to a suitable appointment.
- Directors thanked DG and the panel for their continued work on this.

9. Risk register

- The risk register was tabled and noted.
- Trustees discussed the ongoing risk associated with fundraising capacity and agreed this should continue to be actively monitored.
- It was noted that the register is reviewed and updated regularly.

10. Strategic plan and draft operational plan for 2026

- Dawn presented the updated Strategic Plan, reflecting revisions agreed by the Board earlier in the year.
- A detailed Operational Plan for 2026 was also presented, including KPIs aligned to strategic objectives.
- Trustees welcomed the clarity and alignment between strategy, operational activity, and reporting.
- The Strategic Plan and draft Operational Plan for 2026 were approved.

11. Funding panel discussion and plans for 2026

- DG reported on the first funding panel meeting following a pause in applications.
- One application was withdrawn prior to panel consideration.
- Nine applications were assessed; seven were supported in full.
- Two centres were deferred:
 - Supportability
 - White Lodge
 These were agreed for support in the 2025–2026 financial year following a short decision-making Board meeting in early October.
- **Change to funding panel timetable:**
 - DG proposed moving panel meetings to October and March to enable most grants to be managed fully within a single financial year. Trustees agreed to this change, with flexibility retained where longer spending periods are required.

Items for information

12. IKCT – KN Grant report September 2025

- DG confirmed that the first formal report to the Trust had been submitted and was well received.
- Trustees noted the content and format of the report.

13. Karten Network Development Co-ordinator update

- DG highlighted key activity including:
 - Ongoing centre engagement
 - Membership of AAATE and BATA
 - Publication of the Autumn newsletter since the report was written
- The update was taken as read.

14. Technology Adviser update

- MP confirmed there was nothing further to add beyond his written report.
- Trustees noted his reflections on the Google Accessibility Discovery Centre, particularly the emphasis on continual learning. MP was thanked for his continued work.

15. Israel Karten Centres update

- DG summarised the update provided by Debbie Ben-Tal.
- Trustees noted that, despite ongoing challenges, the report reflected increased activity and a more hopeful outlook.
- The Board expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of colleagues working in difficult circumstances.
- It was suggested that a short paragraph explaining Karten Network's links with Israeli centres be included in a future newsletter; DG agreed to consider this.

16. Any other relevant business

- **Companies House personal codes:**
 - DG thanked Directors who had already submitted their codes.
 - Outstanding submissions will be followed up individually to meet the 21 November filing deadline.
- **RNLI / post-16 SEND programme:**
 - SC shared information about a trial programme being delivered in January; updates will follow.
- **Assistive technologist benchmarking:**
 - KH raised challenges around benchmarking roles and pay for unqualified but highly experienced assistive technologists.
 - RS agreed to share role profiles and salary information.
 - DG outlined how future membership of the Professional Association of Assistive Technologists may help provide recognition and benchmarking without reliance solely on formal qualifications.
- **Next meeting:**
 - The next Board meeting will take place on 12 February 2026 at 10.00am, via Microsoft Teams.