COSCA
Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

An additional meeting of the COSCA Board was held on 25th June 2026 from 2pm -3.30pm via Zoom.

PRESENT

Jan Kerr	Chair/ Training; Recognition Scheme
Carol Smart	Rurality
Ashlie McVey	Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Stuart Valentine	Relationship Counselling
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Christina Oliver	(Minute Recorder)

Apologies: Martha Pollard, Lisa McGilvray, Linda McLachlan and Erika Wolfe.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Board members and thanked them for attending. It was noted that the meeting had been scheduled for two hours, with a comfort break, and that the ongoing financial situation would remain the main focus of the meeting. It was also noted that a number of items carried forward from previous meetings would be considered if time permitted.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Board considered the draft minutes of the meetings held on 11th May, 19th May and 1st June 2026.

The draft minutes of each meeting were approved by the Board, subject to any agreed redactions noted below.

3. REDACTION OF MINUTES – 11TH MAY 2026

The Board considered the proposed redactions to the minutes of the 11th May meeting, particularly in relation to the ongoing financial incident and Police Scotland investigation.

It was agreed that sensitive detail should not be published while the investigation remained ongoing. The Board agreed that the minutes should retain sufficient information about decisions and actions taken to demonstrate appropriate governance and transparency, while excluding detail that could prejudice the investigation or disclose sensitive information.

BM was asked to action the above kinds of redactions.

4. REDACTION OF MINUTES – 19TH MAY 2026

As above.

5. REDACTION OF MINUTES – 1ST JUNE 2026

As above.

6. MATTERS ARISING – 1ST JUNE 2026

No separate matters arising were identified, as outstanding actions had been carried forward into the current agenda.

7. FRAUD INCIDENT – OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

The Board received a chronological update on developments since the 1st June meeting.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Communications
The Board noted that the statement to members issued on 5th June had received a positive and supportive response. No significant media interest had arisen. Members had been reassured that the incident would not threaten COSCA's future operation and that personal details had not been compromised in the course of the fraud incidents.

The Board agreed that no FAQ document was currently required and that any queries should be addressed as they arose.

The incoming Chair was due to meet with JK and BM to discuss the fraud incidents. The Board agreed that the meeting should proceed, with the incoming Chair being made aware that the information discussed would be confidential.

COSCA's Trustees Report 2025-26
The Board noted that AAB was due to undertake additional financial assessment work, including a 'cold review' for this year's Trustees Report and that AAB's review of COSCA's financial position, systems and procedures would provide further information to support discussions with the Scottish Government and may inform future financial systems and procedures.

8. FRAUD INCIDENT – ACTIONS

The Board noted the actions arising from the fraud incident update.

[redacted]

[redacted]

9. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND FORECAST

CS provided an update on the financial information received from BM, including the budget report, balance sheet, profit and loss account and trial balance for the year ended March 2026.

[redacted]

The Board discussed the need for a forecast for the coming financial year which reflected different possible outcomes relating to the outstanding fraud loss and Scottish Government funding.

[redacted]

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Board considered the standing item on equality, diversity and inclusion. No specific actions were agreed. The Board noted that forthcoming legislation from the new Scottish Parliament should be monitored for any implications for COSCA's work.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT – GUIDANCE AND OPERATIONS

The Board reviewed the Code of Conduct guidance in light of recent situations where individuals had contacted Board members directly regarding matters which would normally have been addressed through COSCA's established procedures.

The Board reaffirmed that the role of Board members is to provide strategic governance and that operational matters are delegated to the Chief Executive and through him to the COSCA team, panels and committees. It was agreed that members should avoid becoming involved in operational matters or bypassing established processes, including complaints and recruitment procedures.

It was agreed that the guidance in the above Code of Conduct remained appropriate and that it was worthwhile for current Board members to revisit it again and refresh themselves about the Board's role and boundaries, and that it should continue to be included as part of the induction of new Board members.

The Board welcomed the guidance as a useful reference for Board members when responding to direct approaches.

12. RECOGNITION SCHEME – 2025/26 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board noted the Recognition Scheme annual report for 2025/26, submitted by Jenna Fraser, Recognition Scheme Development Officer.

The Board acknowledged the breadth of activity undertaken through the scheme and thanked JF for the work reflected in the report.

13. RECOGNITION SCHEME – 2026/27 BUSINESS PLAN

The Board considered the Recognition Scheme business plan for 2026/27.

It was noted that the core work of the scheme remained broadly consistent, including renewal of recognition status, monitoring and site visits, while the plan also reflected ongoing development work, including updates arising from changes to the Disclosure (Scotland) Act, work on the Recognition Scheme handbook, cafés and the development of new applicants.

The Board noted the plan and thanked JF for its clear objectives and timescales.

14. ELECTION MANIFESTO PLEDGES

The Board considered COSCA's election manifesto pledges concerning access to appropriate counselling and psychotherapy services, good mental health and wellbeing, and appropriate support for counselling and psychotherapy services and associated training programmes.

It was noted that political parties had acknowledged receipt of the pledges, but there was no clear evidence that the pledges had been incorporated directly into party manifestos.

The Board noted that submitting the pledges remained useful in articulating COSCA's policy priorities.

15. AI GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS

The Board considered the draft AI Guidelines for Members, which had previously been discussed with staff and the Ethics Committee.

The Board thanked LMcL for her contribution to the development of the guidance and recognised the importance of having clear guidance in place given the rapidly developing nature of AI.

It was noted that the guidance should be reviewed regularly as the technology, professional practice and relevant expectations develop.

Decision: The Board approved the AI Guidelines for Members.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Board confirmed that the next scheduled full Board meeting would remain Monday 24th August 2026.

Given the continuing financial situation, the Board agreed that a provisional additional meeting should be identified for late July, which could be cancelled if no meeting was required. The purpose of any additional meeting would be to consider significant developments, such as a response from Virgin Money or Police Scotland, rather than necessarily to conduct the full standing agenda.

Action: A Doodle Poll will be circulated to identify a suitable date for a provisional late-July meeting.

17. AGM UPDATE

The Board noted that preparations for the AGM remained on schedule. It was confirmed that the event was expected to proceed as planned.

The Board discussed the importance of the planned time within the two-hour AGM programme for questions and an opportunity for members to network in the breakout sessions, in addition to the formal reports and speaker session.

18. CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair reflected on the significant work undertaken by the Board and staff during the recent financial crisis and acknowledged the collective effort involved in managing the situation.

The Board recognised that the situation appeared to be moving away from the immediate crisis phase and expressed appreciation for the constructive and collaborative way in which the Board had responded.

The meeting closed at approximately 3:30pm.