



Decision Making Policy

Approved by Trustees on: 1st June, 2026

Review Date: June 2027

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how decisions are made at Newbiggin Arts Centre to ensure they are transparent, fair, legal and in the best interests of the organisation and the community it serves.

2. Principles

All decisions will be guided by the following principles:

- Supporting the charitable aims and mission of NAC
- Acting in the best interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries
- Transparency and openness in decision making
- Accountability to Trustees, volunteers, funders, and the community
- Respect for diverse views and constructive discussion
- Be lawful

3. Types of Decisions

Decisions at NAC are categorised as follows:

1. **Operational / Routine** – Day-to-day activities, small purchases, minor event changes
2. **Financial** – Budget approvals, spending above thresholds, contracts
3. **Strategic / Programmatic** – New programmes, partnerships, long-term plans
4. **Governance / Legal** – Policies, Trustee appointments, legal compliance

3.1 Operational / Routine Decisions

These relate to the day-to-day running of NAC and are generally low-cost, low-risk decisions (e.g. supplies under £200, room bookings, overall schedule of exhibitions, etc.).

Examples:

- Planning workshops and activities
- Volunteer coordination
- Routine purchases and supplies
- Exhibition planning and hanging
- Event planning

Decision Maker: Studio Manager, Trustees

Escalation: Chair if urgent, or unusual

Record Keeping: Decisions should be noted in operational logs or team meeting notes

3.2 Financial Decisions

Financial decisions must follow NAC's approved budget and financial controls.

Guidelines:

- All spending must align with the approved budget
- Regular outgoings, such as rent, utilities and tutor payments must be approved/settled by the Treasurer
- Spend of restricted funds from grants must be approved/settled by the Treasurer
- Large or unusual expenditure must be approved by a quorum of the Board of Trustees (3 Trustees)
- Spending thresholds:
 - Below threshold (e.g., < £200) → Studio Manager or designated Trustee can approve
 - Between £200 and £1000 must be approved by a minimum of two (2) Trustees
 - Above £1000: Whole Board of Trustees or quorum
- BACS and debit card transactions can only be made by designated signatories of the Lloyds bank account (currently Steve, Val and Wendy)
- All cash expenditure over £10 must be made using the NAC expenses system and settled by BACS. Expenditure under £10 should be made using Petty Cash
- All financial approvals above the threshold must be documented

3.3. Strategic / Programmatic Decisions

These relate to the long-term direction of NAC and require Board of Trustees approval.

Examples:

- Strategic plans and major projects
- New programmes or long-term initiatives
- Partnerships
- Funding applications through sub- committee (VH, SW, AD): to identify potential funding sources and projects, and to complete and submit grant applications. Updates to be fed back at BoT meetings.
- Financial commitments above agreed limits
- Policies and governance matters

Decision Process:

- Chair facilitates discussions but cannot decide alone
- Decisions made by majority vote of a quorum of Trustees present
- Chair has casting vote in the event of a tie
- Decisions must be recorded in board minutes

3.4 Governance / Legal Decisions

Governance and legal decisions include:

Trustee (and/or Employee, Intern) Appointments:

- Discussed in board meetings
- Facilitated by Chair
- Appointments by vote of full BoT – doesn't have to be unanimous, a majority will do (Chair doesn't vote, but does if there is a tie)
- Recorded in minutes

Policy Changes / Legal Compliance:

- Reviewed and approved by quorum
- Documented in board minutes

4. Trustee Decision-Making

- Major decisions are made at Trustee meetings
- Decisions normally made by majority vote of Trustees present
- Chair has casting vote if tied
- A quorum (3 Trustees) must be met before decisions are valid

5. Delegated Authority

Trustees may delegate authority to:

- Chair, or designated Trustee
- Treasurer
- Studio Manager, project or programme leads
- Volunteers responsible for specific activities

Conditions:

- Delegated decisions must remain within agreed budgets and policies
- Delegated decisions should be reported back if the delegee decides it is important enough. (Many delegated tasks don't need reporting back.)

6. Conflicts of Interest

If a Trustee, employee, or volunteer has a personal interest in a decision:

- They must declare it
- They may be asked to leave the discussion
- They shall not vote

7. Recording Decisions

- Key decisions must be recorded in meeting minutes
- Minutes will be stored securely and available to Trustees and relevant stakeholders

8. Urgent Decisions

- Trustees may consult other Board Members electronically for urgent matters
- Decisions (other than sensitive financial details) must be recorded and formally noted at the next board meeting

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least every two years, or sooner if organisational changes or regulatory requirements necessitate.

Signed on behalf of the NAC Board of Trustees:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve R Wilkinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Steve Wilkinson
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
1st June 2026