Minutes for Meeting Book - CIFO Board Meeting 52 April 15, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman ("**CIFO**"), was held on April 15, 2026, at Stratus 2, Forum 3, Grenville Street, St Helier, Jersey.

Persons present in-person or telephonically were:

Board:	Chair: Antony Townsend (AT)
	Deputy Chair: Rob Girard (RG)
	Director: Hayley North (HN)
CIFO Executive:	CEO: Douglas Melville (DM) Head of Legal, Policy & Compliance: Charlotte Brambilla (CB)
	Head of Finance: Alison Finn (AF)
	Head of Complaints Resolution: Ross Symes (RS)

Item 1 Agenda

The Board approved the Agenda.

Item 2 Review of Director and CEO Declarations of Interest

The CEO declared his new appointment as a member of the Health & Social Care Complaints & Learning Group in Guernsey. This appointment had been formally approved by the Chair before it was accepted. No other new declarations were made.

It was noted that the declaration of interest made by RG at the last meeting did not constitute an interest requiring declaration. Accordingly, it had not been added to the Register. The Board also noted that Jennifer Carnegie should be removed from the Register following her resignation of 31 December 2025.

The Meeting accordingly approved the Director and CEO Register of Interests being updated.

Item 3 - Matters arising from Board Strategy Discussion

The Board noted its adoption and approval of the following items:

- To deliver an engagement programme to both Governments demonstrating CIFO's value as a trusted organization and further educate it as to its operational and financial challenges and pilot the new budget approval process with them.

- To maintain CIFO's existing fair and reasonable test for Ombudsman's decisions and not to adopt the proposed new test which the UK Financial Ombudsman Service are looking to adopt.

- The Annual Stakeholder Meeting to be moved to either 7th or 8th July subject to availability of the video production provider.

Item 4 - Gifts and Hospitality Register

The Board noted the new items added to the Register and were satisfied that they had been declared and managed in accordance with CIFO's Gift and Hospitality Policy.

Item 5 - Declaration of any interests and potential conflicts with respect to the Agenda The Board noted there were no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the Agenda.

Item 6 - Minutes of last Board meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting in the form appended to the Agenda.

Item 7 - Review of Board Action Tracker

The Board reviewed the Board Action Tracker, noted the actions outstanding and the updates made to the actions since the last Board meeting and approved the same.

It was noted that the Board would undertake its board effectiveness review towards the end of year or early next year.

Item 8 - Review of CIFO Staff Annual Declarations of Interest

The Board were updated in relation to any new, additional or changes to CIFO Staff members' existing declarations of interest which were made last year.

The Board discussed new potential conflicts of interest of CIFO's current staff, determined whether they constituted a conflict of interest and, where a potential conflict existed, the Board determined appropriate arrangements to deal with the conflict and authorized the CEO to oversee the necessary arrangements for them.

Item 9 - Board to Note

The Board noted and approved the following items:

- Publication of Q4 2025 complaint statistics
- Updates to CIFO Board calendar of activities to accommodate individual board members' availability and to keep Board travel costs to a minimum.
- Previous decisions made by email relating to the publication of the levy consultation and its outcome.

Item 10 - Finance and Risk

The Board noted and approved the following Finance and Risk items.

10.1 CIFO Audit Report and 2025 Audited Financial Statements

Following CIFO's audit, RSM Channel Islands (Audit) Limited confirmed that it was able to issue a clean opinion. The Board therefore approved the Chair and Deputy Chair signing the 2025 financial statements and the Auditor's Letter of Representation, using the updated ICAEW template.

It was noted the 2025 audited financial statements would be appended to the Annual Report, and in due course, published on CIFO's website.

10.2 CIFO 2026 Financials

The Board approved the Finance and Risk Report appended to the Agenda and noted the following items:

10.2a Q1 2026 financial accounts

CIFO's financial performance for the quarter was satisfactory. Income was above budget, mainly because Guernsey case fee income was higher than anticipated, particularly in the health insurance sector. Expenditure was below budget because IT and insurance costs were lower than expected following the deferral of certain projects until after publication of the Annual Report.

The Board asked about the current overspend on CIFO's contract ombudsman. It was advised that this reflected both increased reliance on the contract ombudsman to manage caseload pressures and a new fee structure agreed with contractors at the end of last year. The Board noted that this pressure was likely to continue throughout the year and that a potential overspend of £50,000 was anticipated, with implications for the 2027 budget.

The Board also asked whether this was a temporary or longer-term issue. It was advised that, over time, CIFO should be able to reduce its reliance on the contract ombudsman through the new mentoring and training programme designed to develop adjudicators into Ombudsmen. The Chair noted that the Board would need to consider the issue carefully at its next meeting. It was also noted that the overspend was likely to be treated as an exceptional item in CIFO’s 2027 budget and could have implications for the operational reserve.

10.2.b Q1 2026 cash flow

CIFO's cashflow is forecast to be higher than anticipated due to the higher case fee income. The Board noted that it would need to keep CIFO’s cash flow under review given the current expenditure created by CIFO’s reliance on contractors.

10.3 Risk Register

The Board reviewed the updated Risk Register and approved the same subject to one minor amendment to ensure associated risks were rated consistently.

It was noted the Risk Management Register was intended to be further updated following the Board's strategy discussion in July to allow for tracking of trends and actions arising from changes to the Risk Register. The Board requested clearer reporting on risk trends and changes made to risks in the Risk Register. It was noted that a new Risk Reporting framework was to be discussed at the July Board meeting which would allow for this additional reporting.

Item 11 - CIFO Annual Report

The Board reviewed the final draft of the Annual Report and noted their comments had been incorporated into the final draft. The Board was content to approve the final version of the Annual Report subject to authorising the Chair to liaise with the Management Team to make such further changes deemed necessary.

Subject to any final amendments approved by the Chair, the Board approved for the Annual Report to be submitted to both Governments for approval in accordance with CIFO's laws and then published following its approval on CIFO's website.

Item 12 - CEO's Report

The Board noted and approved the Chief Executive's report which highlighted the following developments:

- The operational team's time had been focussed primarily on the delivery of the newly formatted and styled Annual Report
- Stakeholder work had been undertaken with the Guernsey and Jersey regulators to enhance CIFO's relationships with them; this work is ongoing to ensure better communication and sharing of relevant intel
- Input had been provided to Government of Jersey on its draft secondary legislation for its new consumer credit regime
- The Ministerial meeting with Government of Jersey with its productive discussions relating to those issues affecting CIFO's operations and the proposed extension of the Freedom of Information regime to CIFO
- The publication of the Jersey Public Accounts Committee report and the omission of CIFO as an in-scope body
- The Jersey Financial Crime Unit currently has no Chief Executive Officer in post
- The work done by CIFO with both governments to refine CIFO's budget approval process
- The financial issues affecting CIFO's current landlord and its sale of its property and other business holdings.
- The publication in March of the UK Motor Finance redress scheme with its implications to be considered by CIFO in its developments of its own approach to Motor Finance complaints
- The closure of the oldest cases, which were insurance cases, due to absence of evidence to support the complainant’s claim.

Item 13 - Operations and Case-related Reports

The Board noted and approved CIFO's Complaint Resolutions report appended to the Agenda. The Chair commented and approved the new format, which reported:

- an increase in incoming complaints, stable work in progress but with case closures down

- performance consistent with CIFO's timeliness metrics, excepting stage 2 assessments where CIFO was still not meeting the relevant target
- output was down but not significantly lower than in previous years
- CIFO’s uphold rate for the quarter
- CIFO’s oldest cases were now resolved.

Item 14 - Legal, Policy & Compliance Report

The Board noted and approved the Legal, Policy and Compliance Report appended to the Agenda, which reported as highlights:

- The recruitment and selection of the new CIFO director in accordance with the relevant governance requirements and the status of their impending appointment by the two governments
- The rise of threatened judicial review applications from complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of their cases, one of which was notified to CIFO’s insurer
- CIFO’s service complaint register was updated to enable reporting on trends in the types of service complaints received. Only two service complaints were raised during the quarter, both of which challenged Ombudsman decisions
- The DSAR experience in the quarter was limited to one DSAR, which sought for a record to be corrected.
- Following a restructuring of the fraud policy development stakeholder group, CIFO is now a secondary stakeholder within the group, and it is now led by the Jersey financial regulator
- The generally positive feedback from the Guernsey’s regulator’s Motor Finance Public Survey, and the continued engagement with Government of Jersey in relation to the wider consumer credit regulatory framework under development.
- An update on the publication of feedback on the consultation about extending the FOI regime to ALOs. Government indicated that any extension would be introduced in phases and would be subject to a proportionality assessment for each affected organisation
- The growth strategy for the financial sector of each Government with the publication during the quarter of their strategies for the sector.

- The planned joint event of CIFO, GCRA and ODPA in June introducing these authorities to Guernsey's politicians and its consumer facing stakeholder groups.
- A lower number of responses were received to CIFO's user survey, but the feedback remained consistent with the previous quarter and continued to indicate a positive user experience.

Item 15 - Communications and Outreach

The Board noted and approved the Report from the Communications and Outreach Officer relating to CIFO's adoption of a new Chatbot 'Buddy'. This was indicated as ready to go live at the end of the month. The Board approved the Chatbot to go live when ready, subject to all necessary checks and actions taken.

The Board was updated on the media tracker it had in place in relation to the reputational issues arising from CIFO's former director's involvement in the Jersey court case involving the Coop. The Board was satisfied this remained a low-risk item but agreed formal tracking of this issue could now cease.

Item 16 - AOB

The Board noted one AOB item relating to key man insurance for CIFO's CEO and Principal Ombudsman. The Board approved quotes being obtained and shared with the Board at its next meeting.

Item 17 - In Camera

There were no in camera discussions of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary of the Meeting Date

signed: