



Company number 8098956

MINUTES
BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON COLLEGE TRUST
BOARD MEETING
30TH APRIL 2020

Actions from BCT Board Meeting on 6th February 2020.

Item reference	Action	Person responsible	Date Due
2.1	Add graphical representation of data to the Director of Educations report to make trends more obvious.	TG	02/04/20
2.1	How to get from Good to Outstanding as an item for a future Trustees Strategic Planning day.	PLE	ASAP
2.3.7	Ransom ware attack at MBA report to the next board meeting.	PLE	02/04/20
2.4.1	Future development to be discussed at a Strategic planning even or by a Task and Finish group.	PLE	ASAP
2.4.1	Add access to Speech and Language specialist and Educational Psychologist to the Risk Register.	PLE	19/03/20

Actions from BCT Board Meeting on 30th April 2020.

Item reference	Action	Person responsible	Date Due
2.1.4	Invite all Trustees to the next Finance & Resources committee meeting on 11 th May	GSJ	ASAP



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MINUTES
BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON COLLEGE TRUST
BOARD MEETING
30TH APRIL 2020

Meeting held at Stanchester Academy and started at 8.00am

Members:

✓	Andy Berry	(ABe)	Chair	<i>Bridgwater College</i>
✓	Bob Brown	(BB)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Carole Chevalley	(CC)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Peter Elliott	(PLE)		<i>CEO</i>
✓	Sid Gibson	(SG)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Jane Gillespie	(JG)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	David Hannay	(DH)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Richard Hawkins	(RH)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Denys Rayner	(DR)	Vice Chair	<i>Independent Trustee</i>
	Bex Sinclair	(BS)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Heather Strawbridge	(HS)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>

In Attendance:

✓	Nicola Mould	(NM)	<i>Chief Finance Officer</i>
✓	Tamsin Grainger	(TG)	<i>Director of Education</i>
✓	Greg Jones	(GJ)	<i>Company Secretary</i>
✓	Mike Hodson	(MH)	<i>CoG BCA (from 8.25am)</i>
✓	Jason Gunningham	(JG)	<i>CoG Brymore</i>
✓	Sam Reilly	(SR)	<i>CoG Hamp</i>
✓	Martina Forster	(MF)	<i>CoG WSC</i>
✓	Claire Winson	(CW)	<i>CoG OPS</i>
	Simon Darley	(SD)	<i>CoG Stanchester</i>

(✓ In attendance)

The chair welcomed everybody to this virtual meeting.

Item	Description	Action
1	Procedural matters	
1.1	Apologies	

Apologies were accepted from Bex Sinclair.

Simon Darley were also unable to attend.

Item	Description	Action
	The Clerk confirmed that with 10 of the 11 Trustees present that the meeting was quorate (30%).	
1.2	Declarations of Interest AB declared an interest on item 4.5 – Bridgwater & Taunton College also use the I-Trent HR system.	
1.3	Minutes of the meeting on 6th February 2020. The minutes were approved and will be signed by the chair at the first opportunity. Minutes of the meeting on 26th March 2020. The minutes were approved and will be signed by the chair at the first opportunity.	
1.4	Matters Arising Actions form meeting of 6th February 1.4.1 2.1 – Director of Education reports to include graphical representation will remain an action for the end of the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.4.2 2.1 – How to get from Good to Outstanding will remain an action for the end of the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.4.3 2.3.7 – The Clerk now has the Ransom Ware attack at MBA report and will include in the agenda for the next meeting. 1.4.4 2.4.1 – The Strategic Planning event has been put on hold during the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.4.5 2.4.1 – The recruitment of a Speech and Language Specialist and Education Psychologist has been put on hold during the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.4.6 2.4.2 – The CFO has liaised with the College about the utilisation of I-Trent. 1.4.7 3 – Deep cleaning has been undertaken of elements of Schools that have been mothballed during the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.4.8 3 – The CEO has provided regular updates to the Board via emails and virtual briefings.	

2 CEO Reporting

2.1 CEO's Report

PLE highlighted the main points of his report circulated with the papers for this meeting.

2.1.1 Covid-19 Summary update

The Trust had been making plans for a shutdown and was able to react very quickly when it was announced on the 18th march to take place from 20th March.

It has become used to the “new normal” and is making plans for re-opening.

Item	Description	Action
2.1.2	HR Team The HR team are providing a daily update on the Trusts staffing position. Recruitment has resumed after initially being paused.	
2.1.3	Headteacher Team Schools have identified vulnerable students and are contacting them at least once a week. All students are being contacted at least fortnightly. Only 1% of the student population are accessing the schools. The Trust is making plans if it is required to be open during July and August to support key workers. A Trustee asked if Schools are required to provide support from 7am to 7pm? No – in most cases schools have been open between 7.30am and 5.45pm. A Trustee asked if there had been any difficulties in organising the staffing rotas? Typically, there are 4 colleagues each day, but arrangements are different in each school. There are a combination of Teachers and Support staff providing teaching of core subjects in the morning and activities in the afternoon.	
2.1.4	Finance Team The initial concern for the Finance Team was that 900 families (of the 4700 students) in the trust. Before the Government provided guidance, the Trust provided vouchers for £25 per pupil. Ken Rushton has worked very hard on this and all the vouchers are being issued on time. A Trustee asked about “cash” controls against fraud for the issuing of these vouchers? 99% of the vouchers are issued by email and the School check up to see if they have been spent. They contact families where vouchers have not been spent and conversely families will contact the school if they have not received their voucher. The Spreadsheets used to issue the vouchers are reviewed each week to ensure that details are correct. Purchases have been stopped for “nice to have” items and all approvals are from the CEO. The CFO, CEO, Chair of Trustees and Finance & Resources have been through the Month 6 Management Accounts. They have reviewed the exceptions list of areas that are not in line with the original budget. They are expecting significant savings. Action – Invite all Trustees to the next Finance & Resources committee meeting on 11 th May	

Clerk

8.25am – Mike Hodson joined the meeting

A Trustee asked about the weekly cost of providing Vouchers? This was initially £40k for two weeks of £25 vouchers

Item	Description	Action
	<p>but the Government have now advised that E-Vouchers should be for the value of £15 per week.</p> <p>All these costs were covered by the Free School Meal grant that the School receives. There will be a detailed breakdown at the Finance & Resources committee meeting on 11th May.</p>	
2.1.5	<p>Furloughing staff</p> <p>Staff have been furloughed in areas of Traded activity that is not funded by government grants.</p> <p>Music Teachers at MBA and Sports centre colleagues have been furloughed at 80% of pay.</p> <p>Boarding colleagues at Brymore have been furloughed at 100% of pay.</p>	
2.1.6	<p>Goodwill payments</p> <p>Payments are being made to casual staff that would normally make a significant contribution to the Trust. This has been based on a monthly average of the last 12 months earnings and will be paid for April, May, and June.</p> <p>A Trustee noted that these are important payments for the Trust to incur? The Trust would normally pay £35k for invigilators at BCA and will only be paying out £4k to them.</p>	
2.1.7	<p>Estates</p> <p>Regular servicing of equipment has continued.</p> <p>A significant amount of the estate has been mothballed to save on cleaning costs.</p> <p>Decisions on the £4.4m of CIF bids are not expected until the end of May 2020.</p>	
2.1.8	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>A team of councillors has been established for virtual referrals. The Family Therapy worker is on the Ground at BCA, Hamp, and WSC.</p> <p>The area of concern is families that have experienced changes, such as losing their jobs that the Trust were not aware of at the time of the lockdown.</p> <p>The Trust is making sure that it speaks to the student (not parents)</p>	
2.1.9	<p>ICT Support team</p> <p>The ICT team have been working very hard in supporting colleagues and students while implementing Microsoft Teams across the Trust.</p>	
2.1.10	<p>Future working</p> <p>There is an emerging picture of how things will work in the future while social distancing is in place. How do you socially distance 5-year olds?</p> <p>The Government are discussing a graduated return to school with the most vulnerable students in phase 1 and years 5, 10, & 12 in phase 2.</p>	

Item	Description	Action
	Headteachers are planning for a “new normal” but there has not been any clear guidance on what this will be yet. A 10 day lead in period will be needed whenever a decision is made.	
	A Trustee asked about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? The Trust has ordered face masks but are waiting for guidance from the DFE.	
	It was noted that the Trust did not want to hamper supplies to the NHS at this time of little or no surplus PPE.	
	A Trustee asked about the possibility of staggering the school day? This will be challenge where students are bussed to school.	
	The Local Authority are consulting with schools about this and it is likely that there will be different arrangements at each school.	
	A Trustee asked about Boarding at Brymore? This will be a particular problem where social distancing will have to be maintained and students are at school 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	
	A discussion has already started with the Senior Leaders at Brymore about this.	
	The CEO noted the financial implications of the loss of income from Boarding at Brymore for this term.	
	A Trustee asked about the proportion of students that board? 125 of the 360 Students are boarders.	
	This equates to about £500k income each year.	
	A Trustee asked about potential saving of not offering any boarding? There will be savings to the direct costs for staffing, laundry, energy, food, etc.	

2.1.11 Risks

- Boarding income (as above)
- Traded activities – such as Summer activities at Brymore
- Sports centres are closed and staffing costs are covered. Equipment costs are ongoing, but it is not depreciating. There is a risk that membership will not grow quickly when the lockdown ends.

2.1.12 Treasury management

It was noted that interest rates have fallen sharply. The Finance & Resources committee had been looking at ways to invest before the lockdown and now the potential income has reduced.

2.1.13 Budget Setting

The DFE has reduced the burden on Schools by removing the need for a 3-year Budget plan this year.

The staffing restructure at Stanchester and Maiden Beech to make saving on duplicate roles has been put on hold until September.

The Budgets are being re-worked to set balanced budgets without these savings.

Item	Description	Action
	<p>A Trustee asked if the Trust could accept a deficit budget at Brymore? This will become clear at the Finance & Resources committee meeting on 11th May.</p>	
2.1.14	<p>Capital projects</p> <p>There will be a delay to the Capital projects by contractors pausing work and announcements of CIF bids.</p>	
2.1.15	<p>Planning for re-opening – See above.</p>	
2.1.16	<p>Hinton St George First School</p> <p>The following item is deemed to be Confidential and is contained in a separate minute</p> <p>End of Confidential item</p>	
2.1.17	<p>Swanmead Community School</p> <p>A date has been set for the Judicial Review of 10th June. This may be deferred due to the Covid-19 lockdown.</p>	

Trustees thanked the CEO for his very comprehensive report on the current situation across the Trust.

3 School Improvement

3.1 Director of Education report

Tamsin Grainger highlighted the main points of her report circulated with the papers for this meeting.

3.1.1 Attainment at KS4 and KS5

Schools have to provide the predicted grades to the DFE by the end of May 2020.

TG noted the risk of unconscious bias by middle and senior leaders.

A Trustee asked if there had been any pressure from parents? Not since the guidance from the DFE that there will be no discussion with parents.

It was noted that this situation may increase the awareness of the importance of the Mock exams.

A Trustee asked about the impact on increasing or declining trends in the Schools? There have been no changes to the increasing trends other than a blip at BCA and a decline at Stanchester that were both known about.

TG noted that a consultation has been released on Vocational subjects. There will be an impact on students moving to work where there is no proof of skills attained that were not completed.

3.1.2 Remote Education during the Summer Term

The summer term has started with only 1% of the school population actually in school.

Item	Description	Action
	<p>99% of pupils are being catered for at home.</p> <p>An interactive solution using Microsoft Teams is being rolled out school by school.</p> <p>A Trustee asked if Schools can monitor how many students are accessing the platforms? Yes – Schools can see how many students accessed the system live or later. The difference is that attendance was recorded live by SIMS when all students were in school.</p> <p>Hamp and Otterhampton are using DOJO that is more specialised for Primary Schools.</p> <p>Trustees noted the plight of digitally disadvantaged pupils. 43 laptops have been issued to Year 10 students along with some 4G dongles to allow access to the internet.</p> <p>TG noted the challenges for staff on E-Safety. The updated Safeguarding policy (See 6.1 below) has been re-enforced.</p> <p>3.1.3 Staff Development</p> <p>There are three main areas of staff development being pursued across the Trust; Newly Qualified Teachers; Remote CPD; Staff Well-Being.</p> <p>3.1.4 KS2 March Mock STAs results</p> <p>These tests were impacted by Covid-19 at the time they were taken.</p> <p>A Trustee asked if the prior attainment levels will be st from these test results? There is currently limited advice from the DFE on this. The DFE are not collecting KS2 data this year which probably means that there will be a lot of testing at the start of Year 7.</p>	

4 Reports to the Board

4.1 Audit Committee

Denys Rayner highlighted the main points of the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 19th March circulated with the papers for this meeting.

- Risks of Covid -19

4.2 Finance & Resources Committee

David Hannay highlighted the main points of the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting of 12th March circulated with the papers for this meeting.

- Farm Lease at WSC
- I-Trent HR system (see 4.5 below)

Item	Description	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Policy – this has become less relevant due to the drop in interest rates. Initial Budget indications 	
4.3	Quality of Education Committee	
	<p>Carole Chevalley highlighted the main points of the minutes of the Quality of Education Committee meeting of 5th March circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Bridgwater College Academy These reviews are providing an in-depth understanding of the Academies and the issues that they face. 	
4.4	Safeguarding	
	<p>Trustees noted the contents of the Safeguarding reports circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>Trustees noted the update on current Covid-19 actions included at the end of the report and the priorities to ensure students are safe, even though they are not in School.</p>	
4.5	I-Trent HR System	
	<p>NM highlighted the main points of the recommendation to implement the I-Trent HR system circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further discussion has seen a reduction on the cost of the system by £48k. The link with the Sponsor has allowed the Trust to learn from their experiences when implementing the system. <p>Denys Rayner proposed that Trustees approve the implementation of the I-Trent HR System. Seconded by David Hannay and approved by all eligible to vote.</p> <p><i>(Andy Berry had declared an interest as CEO of the Sponsor and did not take part in the vote)</i></p>	
5	Policies for Approval	
5.1	Whistleblowing Policy	
	<p>Carole Chevalley proposed that Trustees approve the Whistleblowing Policy. Seconded by Jane Gillespie and approved by all present.</p>	
6	Papers for Information	
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy annex – re Covid-19	

Item	Description	Action
7	Next meeting	

T.B.A.

The next scheduled meeting on Thursday 14th 2020 will be moved to a later date.

The meeting finished at 9.45am.

I certify that this is a true, complete and up-to-date copy of the resolutions passed at a duly convened and quorate meeting of the Board of BCT and that the resolutions set out above have not been revoked, rescinded, amended or varied in any manner and remain in full force and effect as at today's date.