

STA Board Minutes 06/07/2020

▶ cossington ▶ Monday, July 6, 2020 ▶ 4pm ▶ Chair: Sarah Noon ▶ Clerk: Jennifer Barnacle

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

MS Teams link sent separately. Please note additional papers to be added shortly. The 2 budget papers have been updated and are different to ones sent previously (adjusted for Pupil Premium figures).

Governors Attending:	>Brian Underwood, Terry Smith, Sarah Noon, Christopher Reynolds
Governors Apologies:	>Mary Delahunty, Mike Cummins, Fr Daley, Phill Bateman
Non Governors Attending:	>Jennifer Barnacle, Antoinette Bouwens, Tom Shannon, Mary Robson, N, Marcella Gillespieeil Lockyer, Ruth Hurcombe, Martin Fitzwilliam, Paula Cooper, Mike Hobbs
Non Governors Apologies:	>

Agenda Item 1	▶ Opening Prayer
MINUTE	The meeting started with a prayer.
Agenda Item 2	▶ Minutes of Previous meeting and matters arising
MINUTE	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Matters arising The wording in the health and safety policy had been amended as agreed. A report on fundraising will be presented to the Board in the Advent term. HR policies have not yet been amended to ensure consistent terminology.
ACTION	Fundraising report to be presented in Advent term. MH HR policies to be amended to ensure consistent terminology. (B/F from March meeting). MR
Agenda Item 3	▶ Declarations of business interests
MINUTE	There were no declarations of interest for the purpose of this meeting.
Agenda Item 4	▶ Approval of Articles of Association
MINUTE	CES had suggested amendments to the Articles of Association. These had been circulated by email to all of the Directors and emailed approval to all of the amendments had been received (copies with clerk). The Board were in unanimous agreement that the new Articles are recommended to the Members.

	The diocese will be informed of the approval.
ACTION	Inform Diocese re approval. CLERK
DECISION	The Board were in unanimous agreement that the new Articles are recommended to the Members.
Agenda Item 5	<p>► Approval of budget and financial elements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budgets had been circulated to all directors and questions arising answered prior to the meeting. It was noted that 2 of the key metrics were not being met - the holding of at least 30 days reserve and the staff cost ratio. 2. The reserves policy was discussed. It currently states 30 days but keeping it at this level affects decision making. The recommended national level is 5%(which equates to around 18 days). This is close to where the Trusts reserves actually are at present. The Diocese had initially recommended 60 days but this had been thought unrealistic by the Trust which had agreed early on on 30 days. It is recommended that given the rigorous approach to financial controls in place and of the growing need to spend money to improve outcomes for pupils in schools that serious consideration is given to reducing the amount of reserves to 5%, in line with the national recommendation. Any decision must be made assessing all risks . The decision to amend the policy lies with the Board. There is an aspirational long term aim to have a strategic reserve in place which would be used for educational interventions, supporting building projects etc. After some discussion it was agreed that the reserves policy should be amended to have a target of 5% as a minimum and a further 1% as a strategic reserve. The reduction in reserves target must not stop work being undertaken on reducing staff costs across schools. 3. The Diocese recommend a staff cost ratio of 75%. The Trust is currently over 80% and some schools are significantly over that percentage. It was noted that there can be differences in how schools calculate their staff costs (eg contracted in catering and cleaning services etc). Staff costs are an area that must be tackled going forward and next academic year will see a concerted effort with the Finance, DPS's and HR departments to undertake a deep dive in some schools and look at their staffing structure. This will be challenging and meet some resistance from Heads. The initial focus will be on the higher risk schools ie those that are in deficit or in danger of going into deficit. The ratio is increasing as it depends on the forecasted figures. When forecasting income a prudent approach is taken and a 1% uplift is assumed. However staffing costs are increasing by at least 2%. The key to getting costs under control is getting effective staffing structures in place in all schools and integrating HR with financial planning. It was noted that restructuring will not give a quick fix and long term planning is necessary. There are many costly practices in schools eg overtime and these need to be brought under control. 4. It was noted that the budget indicates an in-year surplus next year. It will be submitted in September to allow accurate 2019-20 figures to be inserted. The Finance Committee recommend that the budget be approved. It was clarified that only the 2020-21 budget needs approval and submitting . The three years are included just for directors reference and for noting so that they can see the challenges lying ahead. The Board approved the 2020-21 budget and noted the additional two years budgets. 5. The Finance paper was noted. It is proposed that the investment policy is amended (paragraphs relating to 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7) as outlined in the paper. The Board approved the proposed amendments. 6. The Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee have been considering placing funds on deposit to maximise interest. The CMAT is risk adverse. Considerable investigation into options has been carried out and it is proposed that £1.5m is invested into a 12 month Fixed Term account with
MINUTE	

	<p>Arbuthnot Latham at an interest rate of 0.9% (currently getting 0.3%). Due diligence has been carried out. The Board approved the investment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The Finance Committee had considered the Staff Expenses Policy and recommend that it is approved by the Board. The Board approved the policy. 8. The Board approved making the temporary Finance Assistant position in the Central Team permanent. 9. The Board noted the Related Party transactions as detailed in Annex 2 of the Finance paper and stated that it was content with their disclosure. 10. A new version of the Financial Handbook will be available for review in September. 11. The Board will look at pooled budgets in September.
ACTION	<p>Amend reserves policy. MH Amend investment policy. MH Open 12 month fixed term account. MH</p>
DECISION	<p>It was agreed that the reserves policy should be amended to have a target of 5% as a minimum and a further 1% as a strategic reserve. 2020-21 budget approved. Amend paragraphs 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 of the Investment policy as set out in the Finance report. Approved investment of £1.5m in 12 month fixed term account with Arbuthnot Latham. Approve Staff Expenses Policy. Approved permanent appointment of the Finance Assistant. Approved the related parties disclosure.</p>
CHALLENGE	<p>What would be the Diocesan view of reducing the reserves policy? Response at 3 Why is the staff cost ratio getting worse rather than better over time? Response at 3</p>
Agenda Item 6	<p>Lead Lay Chaplains Report</p>
MINUTE	<p>The Lead Lay Chaplain presented the strategic plan 2019-20 update.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There have been no new appointments of Chaplains this year, Two Secondary schools have full time Chaplains, one has a part time Chaplain and another allocates time of a teacher to do chaplaincy work. In the coming year blocks of time will be allocated to that teacher to improve effectiveness. An advert had been placed for 2 Chaplain apprentices but appointments had not been made due to Covid-19. The plan remains to recruit next year. Chaplaincy provision in primary schools remains a mixed bag. 2. There were 5 applicants for the degree pathway course but 3 dropped out. They dropped out for practical and personal reasons but they continue to do chaplaincy work in their schools. 3. The timing of the pilgrimage is the first week of the Leicester school holidays and this seems to account for the low interest. Some schools are reluctant to promote or ask staff to give up their own holiday time. TS will be promoting the trip in schools himself next year to ascertain pupil interest. 4. Chaplaincy Leads have been asked to complete a survey. To date 13 responses have been received. 8 of those 13 use the Briars (61%). Reasons given for not using the Briars were that pupils had accessed it at Primary school or that other outdoor adventure places are used. Results of survey to be sent to directors when complete. 5. Work will continue in 2020-21 on completing a three year strategic plan. 6. There will be a challenge in 2020-21 regarding the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship due to the Coronavirus restrictions. Work is ongoing to establish how this will be undertaken.
ACTION	<p>Send survey results to Directors. TS</p>

CHALLENGE	<p>How far have we got in establishing reliable chaplaincy in all the schools? Response at 1</p> <p>Why did 3 of the 5 participants drop out of the degree pathway course? Response at 2</p> <p>Why was interest so low in the Lourdes trip? Response at 3</p> <p>Have we identified which schools don't use The Briars? Response at 4</p>
Agenda Item 7	<p>▶ Safeguarding Report</p>
MINUTE	<p>MG presented her reports.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CMAT works with both Leicester City and Leicestershire Local Authorities. Both have different protocols and processes. Leicester City has been more accepting of the development of the CMAT protocols and training programme and has engaged well with the Trust. The county appears more distrustful and less willing to engage. Work continues on building relationships. 2. An audit was done in September 2019 but this was probably done too early to be useful. A further audit will be done in 2020-21. Good feedback has been received on training courses. 3. AB and MG had conducted an audit of Single Central Records in December. Schools had been told of any things that they needed to do to be fully compliant along with a timescale. A review will take place over the summer holidays. The main finding was that not all processes were being followed and some additional training and workshops had been held. 4. Supervision and setting up of the Teams DSL Forum are areas for development. They were affected by the shift of focus due to coronavirus. Online supervision is not as good as face to face supervision but in 2020-21 there will be virtual DSL supervisions in small groups until face to face meetings can be held again. 5. There is a need to extend capacity for safeguarding in schools next year. Pupils may return with issues that need to be addressed and staff must be more vigilant in respect of behaviour and spotting signs etc. This will be highlighted in safeguarding training. 6. Good working relationships exist with LADO's. The threshold for LADO's to take action is so high that this can frustrate staff. 7. The CPOMS system is used by all but one school to record safeguarding and behavioural incidents. MG is now able to analyse concerns at schools and this enables her to direct support and training.
CHALLENGE	<p>What are the barriers due to the difference between the LA's and the CMAT? Response at 1</p> <p>Was an audit done regarding support and advice (objective 4)? Response at 2</p> <p>Are all SCR's fully compliant? Response at 3</p> <p>Have there been any areas that could be improved? Response at 4</p> <p>Is there a good relationship with LADO's? Response at 6</p>
Agenda Item 8	<p>▶ HR report</p>
MINUTE	<p>MR presented the HR report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Much work has been undertaken in respect of school reopening. 2. There have been 33 tests taken and 2 staff and 1 child have tested positive. 3. SN, BU and CR meet weekly with members of the executive team as a Covid Risk Assessment Panel. Notes are available on TG.
CHALLENGE	<p>How many staff have tested positive for the virus? Response at 2</p>

<p>Agenda Item 9</p> <p>MINUTE</p>	<p>▶ CMAT Annual Report</p> <p>NL presented the report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chairs will receive the annual report. 2. The Board are looking at providing training courses for LGB's in addition to those offered by the Diocese, e.g a course on understanding the Head teachers report. The CMAT wants specific training so that LGB's are delivering what the Trust requires of them. 3. The Clerk stated that some schools had requested guidance about their role going forward in the changing landscapes of schools due to coronavirus eg governor visits, recovery curriculum. 4. Remote training is welcomed by LGB's.. 5. The Board stated that the report was a good summary of the last year and thanks were expressed to all of the staff for their hard work this year and for the support they have offered to schools.It has been an exceptional team effort which has tested resilience.
<p>6.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 10</p> <p>MINUTE</p> <p>DECISION</p> <p>CHALLENGE</p>	<p>▶ 'RED' schools update</p> <p>MF and RH presented their reports.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are 4 primary schools identified as red, either due to a requires improvement judgement by Ofsted or at a risk of that judgement. Much work has been going on with these schools and although there has been progress made there is still further work to be done. All will continue to be supported in the next year. Directors discussed the issues and responses at all 4 schools. 2. The Board agreed that it needed to ensure that the governing bodies at Red schools needed to be directed more specifically. Training could be arranged for the governors so that they know what they need to be challenging. 3. The 'Amber' primary schools all remain amber. Some progress has been made in most of the schools. One school is at risk of becoming red due to a declining good judgement from Ofsted. 4. The next Teams around the Schools meeting is at the end of September. Prior to that there will be online meetings with schools to look at what priorities are and areas for development. 5. Two secondary schools are identified as Red. The Directors discussed the issues and responses at these schools. There has been progress at both schools. 6. There will be a programme of assessment at all schools once pupils return to assess the long term impact of the lockdown. Ofsted will want to know how schools have catered for disadvantaged students over the period . Statistics will be shared with the Board when available. 7. In respect of GCSE and A level results, three schools will remain average and one will be above average. All schools took part in moderation and there is likely to be standardization models used. 8. Several schools have budgetary constraints. The DPS's work with the finance team on developing budgets and work is ongoing to ensure that money is spent in the most impactful areas and that staff are of a high quality. When schools do not meet metrics, the case for spend will be on an educational value added basis. <p>Direct and Train Governors at Red schools on areas to focus on.</p> <p>Have Amber schools made progress? Response at 3</p> <p>What will GCSE and A level results be like? Response at 7</p>

**Are budget constraints having an impact on delivering educational impact?
Response at 8**

**Agenda Item
11**

▶ **Reopening plans and broader priorities for 2020-21**

MINUTE

The 2020 Advent term priorities are:

1. The safe return of all pupils and staff from September 2020. The first draft of the risk assessment has been shared with heads. Feedback has been requested and a final version issued on 8 July.
2. Effective diagnosis of gaps and vulnerabilities. Staff have been informed to make no assumptions about returning pupils. Pupils that have returned to date have been happy to return and focused but in many schools the most vulnerable have not been attending.
3. Recovery Curriculum. The aim is to ensure gaps are filled by October half term. This is very ambitious and it is accepted that some pupils will need longer.
4. Effective assessment. The first assessment will be at half term and will be reported back to the Board in due course.
5. Contingency planning for a future lockdown.
6. Application for teaching school hub status. This would bring huge recognition for the Trust and would facilitate good training for our own staff and staff in other schools. Two areas have been identified in the region and the Trust is applying for North Leicestershire and Rutland. Applications close on 30 October. Our experience with the teaching school will be an advantage and if we were successful the Hub would be at the centre of school improvement across the region.
7. The CMAT has submitted a bid to the DfE for the Exemplary Leadership Programme (helping leaders to develop through curriculum delivery). Two positions are available nationally. A decision is expected by the end of July.
8. More strategic priorities will be developed over time.

**Agenda Item
12**

▶ **2020-21 Meeting dates**

MINUTE

Full committees and Board 10/9/20

Board 14/12/20 29/3/21, 5/7/21

Committees 26/1, 27/4,

Additional finance 17/6

Audit and risk 26/11, 19/5

The first meeting will be held by MS TEAMS

**Agenda Item
13**

▶ **LGB Chair nominations for approval**

MINUTE

The clerk presented the list of nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs. The Board approved all nominations.

Some schools have yet to make a nomination. A full list can be ratified by the Board in September.

Consideration is being given to the Trust holding its own training for new Chairs.

DECISION All nominations received were approved.

**Agenda Item
14**

▶ **Any Other Business**

MINUTE

1. The delegation of authority (to the CEO in respect of reopening date) was formally approved.
2. The Board once again thanked all of the executive team and the wider central team for all of their efforts in a challenging time.

3.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

STA Board July20 *dated: 06/07/2020*
Minutes approved by Jennifer Barnacle