



Company number 8098956

MINUTES
BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON COLLEGE TRUST
BOARD MEETING
3RD FEBRUARY 2022

Actions from BTCT Board Meeting on 3rd February 2022

Item reference	Action	Person responsible	Date Due
2.1.2	Hold a separate conversation with Trustees about Inclusion / Exclusion.	PLE	ASAP



Company number 8098956

MINUTES
BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON COLLEGE TRUST
EXTRAORDINARY BOARD MEETING
3RD FEBRUARY 2022

Meeting via Microsoft Teams started at 5.00pm

Members:

✓	Andy Berry	(AB)	Chair	<i>Bridgwater & Taunton College</i>
	Alan Belsey	(Abe)		<i>Parent Trustee</i>
✓	Bob Brown	(BB)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Carole Chevalley	(CC)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Kom Djouba	(KD)		<i>Parent Trustee</i>
✓	Peter Elliott	(PLE)		<i>Trust Leader</i>
✓	Sid Gibson	(SG)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Jane Gillespie	(JG)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Marie Goddard	(MG)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Richard Hawkins	(RH)		<i>Independent Trustee</i>
✓	Denys Rayner	(DR)	Vice Chair	<i>Independent Trustee</i>

In Attendance:

	Nicola Mould	(NM)		<i>Chief Finance Officer</i>
✓	Tamsyn Grainger	(TG)		<i>Director of Education</i>
✓	Greg Jones	(GJ)		<i>Company Secretary</i>
✓	Mark Thomas	(MT)		<i>Brymore Academy</i>
✓	Mike Hodson	(MH)		<i>CoG BCA</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>
	Mike Robbins	(MR)		<i>CoG Stanchester</i>
	Jonathan James	(JJ)		<i>CoG Maiden Beech</i>

(✓ In attendance)

The chair welcomed everybody to this virtual meeting.

Item	Description	Action
1	<u>Procedural matters</u>	
1.1	Apologies Apologies were accepted from Nic Mould, Mike Robbins, Jonathan James. Alan Belsey sent apologies after the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that with 10 of the 11 Trustees present that the meeting was quorate (30%).	

Item	Description	Action
1.2	Declarations of Interest None	
1.3	Minutes of the meetings 2nd December 2021 The minutes of the board meeting of 2nd December 2021 were accepted as a true record.	
1.4	Matters arising 1.4.1 1.5 Covid-19 regulations have been kept under review, and it was decided to hold this meeting virtually. 1.4.2 2.2.3 Percentage information has been added to the reading age report for the next Quality of Education meeting. 1.4.3 2.2.4 West Somerset College are receiving support for Computing from the Kings School in Taunton.	
1.5	Feedback on Board External Review The Clerk (Greg Jones) gave verbal feedback of his meeting with Karl George of The Governance Forum on progress with the external review. TGF recognised the time that it took to complete the surveys was quite long but noted that the answers will enable them to produce a comprehensive report. A report on the Board Pack has been received earlier this week and the remaining reports should be received by half term. Review of the Local Governing Body meetings will take place during the spring term. The full reports will be shared with all the Board and the Search committee will review them and make recommendations.	
1.6	Approval of Admissions Arrangements The Clerk (Greg Jones) reported that the consultations had finished on 17 th January and that he had not received any comments on the draft arrangements previously approved by the Board. 1.6.1 Bridgwater College Academy Denys Rayner proposed that Trustees approve the final 2023/24 Admission Arrangements for Bridgwater College Academy. Seconded by Carole Chevalley and approved by all present. 1.6.2 Hamp Academy Sid Gibson proposed that Trustees approve the final 2023/24 Admission Arrangements for Hamp Academy. Seconded by Jane Gillespie and approved by all present. 1.6.3 West Somerset College Bob Brown proposed that Trustees approve the final 2023/24 Admission Arrangements for West Somerset College. Seconded by Marie Goddard and approved by all present.	

Item	Description	Action
2.	<p><u>Trust Leader Reporting</u></p> <p>2.1 Trust Leaders report The Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) highlighted the main points of the Trust Leaders report circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>2.1.1 Covid-19 update Absence and infections are still high especially at Hamp and West Somerset College.</p> <p>2.1.2 Short Term Alternative Provision The Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) and the Chair of the LGB at Stanchester (Mike Robbins) have carried out a “Deep Dive” into behaviour at the school. There is a problem with the inclusion of a small number of pupils, but generally little disruption to the lessons. These pupils do not engage and then seek to get excluded to avoid being at school. The Trust Leader has complete confidence in the leadership of the headteacher and extra support is being provided to the Senior Leadership Team from the central team. The Trust is considering moving an element of the “Get Ahead” (virtual learning) programme to day-time to provide live lessons for excluded pupils to ensure that they continue to receive high quality education.</p> <p>A Trustee asked how the school knows where pupils are when they are excluded at home? The Trust is seeking advice from the Local Authority on this. The option is to provide a short term alternative provision rather than a Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE).</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the wider issue of where children go after they have been permanently excluded and the obrogation of responsibility by the Local Authority when they push back responsibility to the school? The Local Authority have stated that they do not have any places for Key Stage 4 pupils and that they will all be placed back into mainstreams schools.</p> <p>The Trust Leader noted that schools in Bridgwater were discussing the option of commissioning their own places at The Bridge School for excluded pupils. A pupil who has already been excluded twice and attended a PRU has recently been placed at Stanchester. The dilemma for the school is that the school will be unable to offer more support as the Local Authority will not provide any more money to pay for it.</p> <p>It was noted that the Local Authority are about to undergo a Children’s Services inspection and would there be an opportunity to influence the outcome</p> <p>Action – Hold a separate conversation with Trustees about</p>	

PLE

Item	Description	Action
	Inclusion / Exclusion.	
2.1.3	<p>Possible Trust Expansion</p> <p>The Local Authority have indicated that they are proposing a model of top-slicing maintained school budgets by 15% to pay for central services.</p> <p>Two standalone academies in central somerset have approached the trust and discussions are ongoing. There has also been an approach from a group of schools in the local area.</p> <p>The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has asked the Trust to consider engaging with schools in the wider South West region.</p>	
2.1.4	<p>Risk Management</p> <p>Hamp and Stanchester Academies are facing significant risks to their leadership capacity where at Hamp in one week there were 75% of leader off due to sickness and the inexperience of the new leaders at Stanchester.</p> <p>There is also risk from the increasing cost price inflation on budgets.</p>	
2.1.5	<p>Maiden Beech Academy</p> <p>Maiden Beech was inspected by OFSTED on Wednesday 2nd Feb (yesterday) and the outcome is not yet known. It was noted that the Headteacher and team did very well during the inspection. Trustees noted their uncertainty about an inspection of a middle school that is about to close and become a primary school.</p> <p>Phase one of the building work for the conversion to a Primary school is scheduled to finish on 26th August (Only five days before the school opens.</p> <p>A Trustee asked what would happen if the work were not completed on time? The programme of works has only just been signed off. With 40 children signed up for the reception classes next year there is plenty of capacity in the school to accommodate these 2 classes if work overruns.</p>	
2.1.6	<p>Finances</p> <p>The month 4 accounts show that the Trust is outperforming the budget and the Trading Company is still expected to make a surplus.</p>	
2.1.7	<p>Little Beeches Nursery</p> <p>There have been 26 enquiries for places at the Little Beeches Nursery and from people looking to work there. The ten week building programme starts in March 2022 and there is no risk foreseen from the schedule of works.</p>	
2.1.6	<p>Community Garden – West Somerset</p> <p>The Trust has been approached by the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) about using a piece of land at the APEX base as a community garden. A licence arrangement would be put in</p>	

Item	Description	Action
	<p>place to allow community access to the open space indicated on the map included in this report.</p> <p>Access would only be outside of school operating hours.</p> <p>Trustees noted their wider brief to support the local communities. Legal advice is being sought about a let for a peppercorn rent via a gratuitous licence to provide the protection that the Trust needs.</p> <p>Trustees noted the enhanced reputation that this would bring to the Trust in allowing access by the wider community.</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the safeguarding of users of the rest of the site? Access will be outside of school hours, evenings, weekends, and school holidays that will pose no safeguarding risk.</p> <p>As the piece of land is nearer the main road and is separated from the main site by an access road it will provide no risk to the security of the site.</p> <p>All users will be accompanied as usage will be for CCS activities only.</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the insurance / indemnity arrangements? It will be a requirement of the lease for CCS to provide this.</p> <p>Trustees decided that they are happy to proceed with this proposal for approval of the final license.</p>	
2.2	<p>Director of Education report</p> <p>The Director of Education (Tamsin Grainger) highlighted the main points of the report circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>2.2.1 Ensure the curriculum offer in each school is exceptional, challenging, and diverse facilitating students making great progress.</p> <p>Outcomes for 2021-22 include the incentive for staff to train as examiners to upskill themselves as part of their CPD.</p> <p>2.2.2 Ensure that every child reads to within 6 months of their chronological age.</p> <p>Growing Great Schools visits have focussed on the target for all students to read fluently. In school support is being provided, especially at Hamp and Stanchester. (See recent Quality of Education minutes.)</p> <p>2.2.3 Expand the reach and impact of our online teaching provision, exploiting the benefits of our out of hours teaching and catch-up.</p> <p>“Get Ahead” is being delivered as part of the catch-up programme. More Year 11 students have become interested in participating as their mock examinations have been completed.</p> <p>Quality Assurance of “Get Ahead” has been undertaken to ensure</p>	

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	<p>the provision is "Good".</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the funding for the Get Ahead programme especially as more outside organisations are becoming interested? The Trust could apply for an Education Innovation Grant.</p> <p>It was noted that IT support is needed to take the initiative to the next level.</p> <p>2.2.4 Ensure that every teacher is an outstanding practitioner. Growing Great Teachers is supporting staff by training senior and middle leaders as coaches to provide regular feedback.</p> <p>2.2.5 Deliver an exceptional primary school at Maiden Beech Primary Academy. There have been a good number of applications for places at the Primary Academy.</p>	
2.3	<p>Maiden Beech Primary Academy The Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) noted that details of student numbers, building work and applications have been reported above.</p>	
2.4	<p>West Somerset SEN Base The Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) highlighted the main points of the proposed Specialist SEN Provision proposal circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>There has been an ongoing discussion with the Local Authority about creating a SEN base in West Somerset where between 30 and 40 pupils are bussed outside of the area to attend specialist schools. The aim is to allow them to attend school within the local community.</p> <p>The risk to the Trust in running this provision themselves would be in staffing a Specialist and General provision at the same time.</p> <p>In discussion with the West Somerset Academy Trust (WSAT) it was agreed that the provision should be run by the Local Authority. Polden Bower Special School under the executive leadership of Helen Farnell who have the expertise needed to run this provision.</p> <p>The Maths Block at WSC is only currently being used because of Covid-19 and can be made available for the provision. This will be a long-term commitment for the Trust to justify the investment by the Local Authority. The arrangement will be a peppercorn rent with the LA meeting all costs. Including access modifications at the school.</p> <p>It was noted that this will start to solve the remoteness of SEN provision in West Somerset and is a good use of this building.</p> <p>A Trustee asked about provision for 4 -11 year olds? The priority is currently for secondary age pupils, but there is capacity in the building for expansion to include primary pupils.</p>	

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	<p>A Trustee asked what benefit there is to West Somerset College other than financial? This would be a £2m investment that would include improvements to access and parking.</p> <p>This would also provide opportunity for shared professional training. There would be access to other WSC facilities at no extra cost.</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the green credentials of the proposal? Pupils will need to travel less distance to access specialist provisions.</p> <p>A Trustee asked if any extra Trust staff would be required to maintain the provision? This will form part of the feasibility study.</p> <p>Andy Berry proposed that Trustees approve this proposal in principle subject to the outcome of the feasibility study. Seconded by Denys Rayner and approved by all present.</p>	
3.	<u>Financial Reporting</u>	
	<p>3.1 2020/21 Financial update In the absence of the Chief Financial Officer the Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) highlighted the main points of the Month 4 Management Report circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>He noted that the Chair of Trustees, Chair of the Finance & Resources committee, and Trust Leader meet with the Chief Financial Officer to review the monthly management accounts.</p> <p>The assumption in these reports is that all budget areas will be spent in full but that as we get nearer to the end of the financial year that actual spend will become clearer.</p> <p>Revenue There has already been additional revenue this year.</p> <p>Staffing Staffing costs are £204k more than the budget so far this year that includes the additional costs incurred for the covid recognition award.</p> <p>Cashflow It was noted that these figures reflect the assumption that all Capital expenditure will be made during this financial year.</p> <p>The cashflow does drop below the reserves policy limit for one month but will be covered by the end of the financial year. The Chair has discussed this with the Trust Leader and Chief Financial Officer and the Finance & Resources committee will look at this at their forthcoming meeting.</p> <p>A Trustee asked if the low reserves figure will be for more than the month 4 management report? There is no concern at this time as we are early in the financial year and the reserves reporting will be back to normal by the end of the year.</p>	

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	<p>A Trustee asked if the trust is expecting the staffing costs to continue to be above the monthly budget? These costs are related to the staffing of additional support for pupils and are mitigated by additional grant income elsewhere in the budget.</p>	
3.2	<p>Capital Projects</p> <p>The Trust Leader (Peter Elliott) highlighted the main points of the Consolidated Capital Expenditure report circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>The report covers the projects approved in September 2021 and progress has been provided for information.</p> <p>A Trustee asked if the central team are managing the range of projects that the Trust currently has underway? Yes – Futures 4 Somerset are managing the larger projects on behalf of the Trust.</p> <p>A Trustee asked about the impact of the current Supply Chain issues? Delivery of materials does seem to be affected but the prices are continually rising, and contractors are only guaranteeing their prices for a short period of time.</p> <p>It was noted that the priority of some projects has changed to reflect the urgency of some work if there is any danger to the timescale</p>	
3.3	<p>Trading Subsidiary</p> <p>The chair of the Trading Company (Richard Hawkins) highlighted the main points of the Month 4 Trading Company report circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>There has been a drop in the forecasted surplus, but it still exceeds the original budget.</p> <p>Use of the outdoor facilities at BCA has been lower than expected during December.</p> <p>Promotion of the Gym at WSC has seen a rise in memberships.</p> <p>The Board are looking at changing the companies name to BTCT Trading to more accurately reflect its activities.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Reports to the Board</u></p>	
4.1	<p>Audit Committee</p> <p>The Safeguarding Trustee (Carole Chevalley) highlighted the main points of the Safeguarding Reports circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Trust's Safeguarding Lead. • The use of Safeguarding forums to spread the knowledge and increase the involvement of other groups and teams within the Trust. 	
5.	<p>Policies for Approval</p>	

Item	Description	Action
	Admissions consultations are required as they have not been consulted on for seven years.	
5.1	Maiden Beech Primary Academy Admission policy Andy Berry proposed that Trustees approve the Maiden Beech Primary Academy Admissions policy for 2022/23. Seconded by Denys Rayner and approved by all present.	
6.	<u>Papers for Information</u>	
	Clerks Briefing	
7.	<u>Any Other Business</u>	
	None	
8.	<u>Next meeting</u>	
	Trust Strategy Event Thursday 7 th and Friday 8 th April 2022 <u>12.00pm</u> Holiday Inn Taunton The chair thanked everybody for their participation in what had been a busy agenda with some important decisions made for the development of the trust.	
	<i>The meeting finished at 6.26pm.</i>	



Signed..... 7th April 2022
 Authorised Signatory for and on behalf of **Bridgwater College Trust**

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.