

APPROVED Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday 9th July 2020, 6pm via teams

Present:

Liz Holmes (LH) Chair
Duncan Millard (DM) CEO
Ian Wright (IW)
Paul Walker (PW)
Paul Turner (PT)
Mark Greenwood (MG)
Helen Turner (HT)
Christine Price-Smith (CPS)
Anthony Cook (AC)

In attendance:

Anne Lynn (AL) COO
Alexandra Molton (AM) Clerk
Louise Warren (LW) DofE

Apologies:

Jeremy Twynam (JT)

PROCEDURAL MATTERS		
1	Welcome, Apologies and Resignations	Action
	LH welcomed Trustees to the meeting. Apologies were received from JT who was unable to log into the meeting.	
2	Notice and Quorum Requirements	
	The meeting was quorate. LH added an item to Any Other Business regarding the work around changing the name of the Trust to Faringdon Learning Trust.	
3	Declaration of Interest / Pecuniary Interests	
	None were made at this point in the meeting.	
4	Accuracy of the Minutes of Board Meeting held on 21st May 2020	
	Resolution Trustees were happy to sign off the meeting minutes as an accurate record of the meeting. ACTION: LH to sign a copy of the minutes when the current restrictions on meeting in person are lifted.	
5	Matters arising from 21st May 2020 and previous meetings	

	<p>ACTION: DM/AL to check if the font chosen for the new Trust website is dyslexic friendly and also that it is a free font which is compatible with all of our Trust IT systems.</p> <p>DM confirmed the logo is dyslexic friendly and that the logo will be provided as a graphic which can be used on all documents.</p> <p>ACTION: Once finalized each school’s risk assessment and operational strategy which will support them being open to more pupils must be circulated to Trustees.</p> <p>These have been circulated to the Trustees and analysed by Trustees in relation to their own schools. A couple of schools used the OCC template and others made their own but it was easier to compare those using the same format so Trustees asked if it would be possible for schools to all use the OCC templates in future. LW confirmed that Heads will be expanding on their current forms when risk assessing the return to school in September so it would involve a great deal of work to move their current plans to a new format for those not currently using the preferred template. DM asked if JR flagged anything up when she looked through each school risk assessment. AL confirmed that JR confirmed that each risk assessment was adequate for each school. Trustees considered if these would be better to be mandated for all Heads to use the same template for their risk assessments going forward to allow for easier comparison.</p> <p>AL confirmed that regarding concerns about fire doors being left propped open at schools to allow air to flow freely through the building, the Trust’s Health and Safety Consultants have advised that the doors must be closed if the building is evacuated and at the end of the day but otherwise it is acceptable in the current climate for these to be left open during the school day.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Trustee asked if the Trust has sent this information out to all schools? AL: Yes, this has been confirmed in a Head’s meeting and sent out again via email.</p> <p>ACTION: Once updated risk assessment and operational strategy which will support them opening to all pupils in September must be circulated to Trustees to be signed off.</p> <p>ACTION: Trustees to think about Vision, Strategic Aims and what this might look like in a rebrand sense.</p> <p>LH thanked Trustees for sending in ideas and thoughts for the Trust’s Vision and Strategic Aims; to be discussed later in the meeting in accordance with the agenda.</p>	
6	<p>Discuss start time for Board meetings in 2020/21 and note dates</p>	
	<p>LH sent out proposed dates for Board meetings in advance of the meeting. She reiterated that she has reintroduced a short December meeting to look at the Annual Report with the Members’ meeting following afterwards. She has also pencilled in dates for the Trust-wide seminars although these will depend on the situation with the virus.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>Trustees confirmed that they were happy with the dates proposed so these will be added into the calendar. ARC meetings are just being finalised. The first Quality of Education meeting will be 5th November.</p>	

	<p>ACTION: AL to ask SV and AM to add these dates into the calendar.</p> <p>LH also proposed changing the start times of the Board meetings in order for school staff to have a better work-life balance. Trustees considered the proposition to start meetings at 3pm or 4pm. Trustees suggested offering the option to dial-in to meetings as a matter of course for those that cannot attend in person at the times suggested. LH proposed a 4pm start for meeting going forward. Trustees discussed the option to hold virtual meetings in the main and some in-person meetings as required and agreed that this was a possible solution.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>Trustees agreed to trial an earlier start time at the next meeting to see how well this would work in practise.</p>	
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ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY

7	<p>Receive recommendations for ARC on 2020/21 budget approvals</p>	
	<p>AC confirmed that 6/8 schools expected spend for next year to be in a positive position. LGB finance Governors and Heads have worked really hard to bring these in on budget and Trustees recognised the significant impact that this has made. FJS is expecting a deficit budget for next year due to the high number of EHCPs in the school and the TA support required for these children. ARC was comfortable with the reasoning behind why the budget has increased for next year. It is not possible to accurately forecast the future for FJS and FIS due to their dependency on when the new school will open and the transitional period associated with this. Trustees also recognised that there is a growing pressure on funds due to the increasing number of children who require additional support.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Trustees asked what were the results of the CIF bid for the work required to block B at FJS?</p> <p>The Trust was unsuccessful in its bid but the LGB have agreed to fund the repairs to block B from school reserves and also agreed to a new boiler for the school which is needed.</p> <p>SHR are also submitting a deficit budget for next year and 2021/22. Despite hard work from the LGB and Head class sizes are down at the school which has resulted in reduced funding. Having investigated the situation, ARC understands the issues behind the deficit and has accepted these, but has confirmed with the school that within the year the Trust want to see the predicted budget deficit coming down. The school is looking at whether it would be possible to increase class sizes and working hard to recruit more pupils,. More action is required on this, with ARC and the school working together to improve the situation and make it more sustainable going forward. Recruiting more pupils is the key element which will change the school's finances. There are also building issues for SHR with an aging school building, which has also had an impact on the budget. However it is unlikely that any significant improvements will be made to the building due to the impending move to a new site which is currently planned for January 2023.</p> <p>Trustees discussed whether the new houses in Shrivenham will bring forth more pupils for the school, although these have not been forthcoming from the development in the village so far.</p>	

	<p>SHR will need to take significant action next year and FJS continue to monitor their budget closely to avoid straying from their budgets.</p> <p>Funding may prove to be an issue for 2021/2022 at WAT due to a possible downturn in numbers with less military personnel attending training at the Defence Academy. AL confirmed that WAT have planned their budget with much lower numbers than currently to take account of a possible downturn in pupil numbers but the situation is not clear yet. Course start dates could be delayed to January which would mean fewer students initially but potentially an increase part way through the year. This may also impact on FCC who recruit quite a few international students due to parents studying at the Defence Academy.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>After consideration of all of the issues, Trustees agreed to approve the Trust budget for 2020/21. AL confirmed that DfE would usually ask for a 3-year budget plan but have only asked for a one-year submission due to the current situation.</p> <p>AL also reminded Trustees of the changing school picture in Faringdon, with a new school expected to be open in September 2022.</p> <p>Trustees would like to thank the LGBs and Finance Governors, the central finance team and Heads for all of their hard work on budgets this year. The Trust overall is in a much better situation than 3 years ago and AC asked for particular recognition to be made of the work which has taken place at JBL to improve their financial situation.</p>	
8	<p>Update on any matters to be noted by Trustees since May's meeting</p>	
	<p>AC and LH have signed the funding agreement for JBL for their extra funding for fixtures and fittings for their classrooms and their all-weather court. The school will receive £5000 from OCC to kit out each classrooms from OCC; £30k in total. JBL also received £10.5k for sports equipment for the school.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Trustees asked what the results of the CIF bids were.</p> <p>The FJS bid was unsuccessful. The Trust also bid for funds for replacement windows at BUC windows, repairs to the roof at JBL, replacement temp classrooms and repairs to the maths block roof at FCC. The Trust did receive funding for repairs to the FCC maths block roof, which is around £270k. This project has started and will hopefully be completed by November. There were only 10 successful bids in Oxon.</p> <p>There is also urgent boiler work taking place at FJS and FCC, which is around £90k of work and Jo Ray is leading on this. The Trust is currently 80 pupils away from the 3000 students mark and once we get to this figure we don't have to submit CIF bids from the following academic year and will be able to access alternative funding. The figures are based on a January census so there is a slight time lag.</p> <p>Trustees asked what the funding levels would be once there are 3000 pupils in the Trust.</p> <p>ACTION: AL to confirm the funding level which the Trust would receive once there are 3000 students.</p> <p>AL confirmed that works would then be prioritised according to the most recent condition surveys.</p> <p>DM informed Trustees that he recently had a phone call with the Head of Ashbury Primary School about the work of the Trust</p>	

	<p>Challenge Trustees asked if any of the Associate Schools want to join the MAT. DM confirmed that the Head at Ashbury wants the Trust to attend a meeting to talk with their LGB. There seem to be some movement in this area. Farmors are also asking for a meeting with the Trust in the Autumn which may prove to be a positive step. Trustees agreed that it is key that the Heads work to inform their LGBs of the benefits of the schools joining the Trust as only they really know from the benefits of the school joining the Trust. This has been particularly pertinent over the last four months during Covid-19 as these Heads have been attending ALT meetings and receiving support from the Trust.</p> <p>Challenge Trustees asked if would be worthwhile for the Trust to put a limit on the time it will continue to offer support to the Alliance Schools before they would need to decide if they are joining the MAT? DM: It is a tricky situation but the Trust needs a strategy of some kind to try to move forwards.</p> <p>Challenge Trustees asked if the Allaince Schools fear of loss of autonomy. DM: Yes – but the LGB fear this rather than the school. It might be worthwhile letting the Heads know that we only need 80 more students in order to hit the 3000 threshold figure.</p> <p>AL informed Trustees that the Trust has just been through a tendering exercise for outsourcing cleaning and catering across the Trust and both will be contracted out for most schools from September. Neither will be outsourced for Buckland and only catering will be outsourced for L&F. Current staff will be tupeed out to the new contractors. AL will announce on Monday who the contractors are for both.</p>	
9	<p>Update on expansion of pupil groups attending Trust schools</p>	
	<p>A report had been circulated before the meeting and Trustees had no questions about this. The Board passed thanks on to the staff at all of the schools for all of their hard work to get as many children as possible back into school.</p>	
10	<p>Update on any additional matters arising from Q of E meeting in July</p>	
	<p>PT attended a KIT meeting with the Heads and the situation has clearly taken its toll in some schools. The QoE committee would like the Board to thank all staff more formally for the extra work and responsibility over recent times and felt that it was worth highlighting to LGBs the pressure that they may place on Heads, particularly in the run-up to the return in September.</p> <p>DM agreed that a piece could go into the last staff newsletter of the year to thank all staff.</p> <p>ACTION: LH will be writing to those individuals who have gone above and beyond this year across the Trust and send a statement to AM for inclusion in the newsletter.</p> <p>QoE looked at curriculum intent statements at their last meeting. Staff have worked hard to set up rich sequenced curriculums. Peer reviews will be starting next year, when curriculum intent will be measured at schools.</p> <p>WAT Phonics results had improved by March – partly due to the support from Sally Robins (SR) from FIS in implementing the Read Write Inc programme.</p>	

JBL has also signed up for Read Write Inc so now only 2 Trust schools are not using the scheme.

SR is still coaching the new Head at WAT and helping to strengthen the leadership team. There will be an SLT review there soon.

James Hood is leading on EYFS across the Trust and Clare Sylvester helped improve results for Y6s at WAT last year.

Rebecca Cooper has been appointed as Lead Practitioner working on improving outcomes for PPG children; Greg King has been appointed one day a week to support the Computing curriculum across the Trust; Laura Wright has been appointed as the Trust Family Worker for one day a week and Helen Cox has been appointed as SEND Lead for the Trust. James Hood, Lindsey Baldwin and Rachel Kenyon are also on the AIT for next year.

SR is also leading on creating a CPE – Centre for Professional Excellence – to improve staff access to CPD.

The committee has asked for Y6 data from Heads in order to consider this compared to their targets.

There have been no Y1 phonics tests this year but QoE hope these children will be screened at the start of the next academic year.

Y6 children have received teacher assessments of their progress and LW has asked the Head of Y7, Julia Nicholls (JN), how this data will be used to set groups for Maths and English. JN has confirmed that she will speak to the Head for KS3 and confirm the process to LW. Usually SATS results qualify where these children sit.

Henry Bew, Head of KS4, has confirmed a focus on English and Maths for KS4 children next year. Students may be given the opportunity to drop foundation subjects in consultation with parents and children in order to focus on obtaining the best Maths and English results that they can.

There will be a strong focus on the wellbeing of students when they return in September.

With Ofsted inspections re-starting, the committee wants Trustees to be looking more carefully at school websites to make sure they are aware of changes and updates in the run up to a new school year.

The committee also discussed schools charging for non-attendance of pupils from September and asked if the Board should send a statement to schools to be clear about how we expect schools to fine. LW confirmed that the Trust use the OCC template policy which includes wording which makes it clear that schools will fine for non-attendance and OCC administer these fines. Within this model there is an expectation that schools will work with their families to try to improve attendance in the first instance.

Challenge

Trustees asked if it would be worthwhile to bring supervision into schools to support the wellbeing of staff who need more assistance following the crisis.

LH: The Trust is signed up to an Employee Assist programme which can offer support and help to those who want it. It needs to be a choice for staff if they feel they need more support.

PT felt the KIT was really helpful for providing an environment for staff to talk about concerns and LW confirmed that Heads were pleased that he attended as a Trustee.

MONITORING

11 **Wellbeing of Pupils and Staff and implications of September return**

	<p>Heads need to review their current risk assessments in the run up to September and make adjustments as necessary. A key issue for FCC will be transport as less children travelling in on the bus means staggered start times are more likely. Also school will not be allowing parents or visitors on site for at least the Autumn term. Cleaning will also be a key issue with regular cleaning and lots of handwashing taking place in school. Schools may increase their use of hand sanitiser as there are not enough basins in school for the amount of handwashing required. Schools will be focusing on ensuring limited exposure between bubbles and staff will not cross bubbles where possible.</p> <p>There will be a strong focus on English and Maths initially, which will last longer for some schools. Schools have until Summer 2021 to broaden their curriculum.</p> <p>Most schools in the Trust will be using a book called Here We Are to get the children thinking again about unity and togetherness.</p> <p>The Trust will also be tracking back to last year to look at successes in the curriculum. The new Head at FCC is working with the SLT to look at timetabling for next year, especially for Y7s. This needs to be communicated clearly to parents for September. There will be a Trustees seminar in the new academic year to give LGBs a clear idea of what their roles will be in the next academic year.</p> <p>An inspirational curriculum leader is leading a teacher training day in January to motivate and inspire staff.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Trustees reiterated that schools must consider the needs of both those children struggling and those attaining the highest level to ensure that both receive what they need when they return to school.</p> <p>LW confirmed that the Trust has really good Heads who are able to lead their staff to provide the best for all children in their schools. Staff are also really skilled in weaving maths and English into other areas of the curriculum and adjusting their teaching to suit the needs of each child.</p> <p>Trustees to contact LW or DM if they would like to attend the session with the curriculum leader which is at FJS on 4th January 2021.</p>	
12	Governance and Policies	
	No further updates at this time.	
STRATEGIC MATTERS		
13	Review of Trust Vision and Strategic Aims	
	<p>LH thanked Trustees for their ideas and thoughts. A condensed version of the main items was sent round to Trustees ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the Trust needs a short and succinct vision.</p> <p>PT had proposed a vision for consideration.</p> <p>DM thanked Trustees for their input; he will be working on this over the summer months and will bring this back to the Autumn meeting.</p> <p>The Trust is looking for a key powerful phrase.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the ideas which had been put forward and discussed the different ways in which this could be put together.</p> <p>A simple vision statement which staff can then pad out in their own words according to their context within that was discussed.</p>	

	<p>Trustees felt that Support, Challenge and Collaborate had become embedded in the Trust over the last few years, and particularly recently, and that these should be used to form the basis of the Vision for the Trust.</p> <p>ACTION: LH to start to work on pulling together the ideas put forward and send out to Trustees for discussion.</p>	
14	Update on launch of a new logo and website for the Trust	
	<p>LH confirmed that the Trust is now in a position to change its name and the Trustees need to pass a formal resolution in order for this to move forward.</p> <p>LH read out a formal statement to Trustees to resolve that the Trustees want the suggestion of the new name to go to the Members to be ratified.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <p>Trustees agreed the following - The Board propose that the Members pass a special resolution to change the name of the company to the Faringdon Learning Trust from the 1st September 2020.</p> <p>ACTION: LH will take this to the Members when they meet next week.</p> <p>This change will then needs to go to Companies House within 15 days and the name change will then be ready for 1st September.</p> <p>DM showed Trustees a mock-up of the new Trust website.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the Trust needs to think about the stakeholders who will use the website and ensure that this is reflected in how the site is put together.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Trustees asked if DM will be taking photos of all of the schools for use on the new website.</p> <p>DM: Yes but these must be of a very high quality and each school needs to be represented.</p> <p>Trustees liked the new site and felt it was representative of the Trust as an organisation. The new site needs to go live by 1st September as the previous site will no longer exist!</p>	
16	Any Other Business as notified to the Chair before the meeting	
	<p>JT has announced to LH that he will be resigning from the Board. Trustees thanked him for his invaluable contribution during his time as Trustee.</p> <p>ACTION: AL to inform SV of JT's resignation and ask her to seek a new Diocesan Trustee.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting: 24th September 2020, 4pm</p> <p>2019/20 Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>12th November 2020</p> <p>28th January 2021</p> <p>25th March 2021</p> <p>20th May 2021</p> <p>1st July 2021</p> <p>Autumn Governors Conference 10th September 2020</p>	

Meeting closed at 8.42pm.

These Minutes were verbally approved by the Chair on 24/09/2020.

DRAFT