

Board of Trustees Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 10th December
at 4:30pm

Virtual Meeting via Teams
Transforming Futures MAT
Unit 3 Ensign House, Parkway Court,
Longbridge Road, Marsh Mills,
Plymouth PL6 8LR

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Clive Grace – Chair of the Board of Trustees.
Dr Karen Deeny – Trustee.
Mr Peter McDonnell – Trustee.
Mr Tim Thexton – Trustee.
Mr Tim Searle – Trustee.
Mr Graham Oliver – Trustee.
Mrs Carole Burgoyne – Trustee.
Mrs Geraldine Herage – Trustee.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Gavin Gracie – CEO.
Ms Diane Dimond – CFO.
Mrs Hannah Smart – Headteacher
Ms Annais Prestidge - PA.

Minute No.	Agenda Item	Action
1)	<p>ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST REGISTER.</p> <p>CG introduced the meeting. The video call was evidence of meeting attendance. No further declarations of interest.</p>	
2)	<p>APOLOGIES.</p> <p>Mr Denis Parsons – Trustee. Mr Peter Cubbon – Trustee. Mr Lee Earnshaw – Trustee. Mr Matt Bindon – Trustee. Ms Josie Medforth – COO. Apologies received were accepted.</p>	
3)	<p>Consider and agree the minutes from the last Board meeting (19th November 2020)</p> <p>It was considered and unanimously approved that the minutes from the Board meeting on the 19th November 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
4)	<p>Further matters arising and actions</p> <p>No further matters arising and actions.</p>	
5)	<p>Feedback from Clive Grace and Gavin Gracie meeting with the RSC and ESFA</p> <p>CG invited GG to summarise the meeting.</p> <p>GG reported that both CG and GG had a meeting with Hannah Woodhouse South West Director of the RSC, Lucy Livings South West Deputy Director of the RSC, Rachel Hansford South West Director of the ESFA and other area managers. GG reported the main agenda from the RSC and ESFA was their express of concern in and around the Trust and what they were looking for from the Trust, starting with Governance, their uncertainty around the Trust Education strategy and the Trusts financial viability and strategy. GG reported that the RSC and ESFA advised that they would like to see the Trust closely linked with Wave and Special Partnership Trusts and it was also implied from the regulators that they would of liked to see Transforming Futures Trust merge with another larger MAT. GG advised that CG and CB were very succinct and erudite in their responses back to the RSC and ESFA asserting that these issues are being addressed and plans are in place. GG reported that the ESFA also raised the issue of the Delt agreement expiring at the end of January and expressed concern of what the Trust were going to do following this. GG advised that he acknowledged this asserted that the Trust are in the final stages of a full OJEU process. GG reported that the outcome was that the RSC and ESFA understand where the Trust is, however they would like to see the embedding of these strategies over the next few months, with the idea to reassess at some point during the summer time. Lucy also made quite clear that the RSC and ESFA would like to have regular review meetings so monitor if these strategies are being embedded, between January and September 2021. GG reported that during the meeting it was also concluded that it would not be appropriate for the Trust to bid for the Oakhampton project.</p> <p>The Board discussed the report back from the meeting in detail. The Chair will circulate a further update in early January.</p>	
6)	<p>Discuss the Oakhampton Project</p> <p>CG invited GG to introduce this topic.</p>	

	<p>GG summarised that the Oakhampton project is a free school being fully funded by Devon County Council. At the present time he did not recommend that the Trust submit a bid.</p> <p>CG confirmed that all attendees are comfortable with this decision.</p>	
<p>7)</p>	<p>Discuss Governance Strategy and agree the Meeting Schedule for the rest of the academic year</p> <p>CG advised of an email that he sent to all attendees prior to the meeting, rerehearsing the points from the Key Issues paper:</p> <p>Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Board Calendar: The Governance Handbook anticipates that the Board will meet 6 times a year. We propose a ‘basic’ cycle of 1 meeting per term, each preceded by one of each of the Education, Safeguarding, and Finance and Audit Committees. We will have at least 3 x further Board meetings a year, to be determined. Gavin has circulate a revised proposed timetable for Board and Committees which we will consider/approve under Item 7, Document 6. b. Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. We will split Education and Safeguarding Committee into Education and Outcomes, and a new Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee. The latter will cover the wellbeing of staff as well as pupils as per Gavin’s Report. ii. Finance and Audit will continue to cover both subjects, but with a split agenda. For Finance both Gavin and I will attend <i>ex officio</i> in order to stay directly in touch with and advise on financial decisions. We will withdraw for audit matters unless specifically requested to participate, but we will see audit related papers unless there is good reason for us not to do so. iii. We do not see the need to have Vice-Chairs of Committees and propose that the ToRs are revised accordingly. c. Vice Chair of Board and Committee Chairs: I propose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Karen and Carole to be Co-Vice Chairs of the Board. Karen will carry the SIT responsibility. ii. Carole will be Chair of Safeguarding iii. Geraldine will be Chair of Education iv. Graham will be Chair of Finance and Audit v. Tim Thexton will be Chair of Remuneration. d. Board Development: We need to check where we are in terms of skills experience as against the competencies we need across the Board. I will send round a suggested format through which we can make an assessment of strengths and gaps, and decide what action if any we need to round out our capacities and capabilities as a Board. e. Clusters: The purpose and objectives of the clusters is unclear and doesn’t seem to strengthen communication or triangulation of school to Board dialogue. To discuss further at the Board, with the Heads and the Chairs of the Clusters in due course. f. Governance Development Plan: We will have a Governance Development Plan to cover the above and other issues, for consideration at the Board in the New Year, and amendment/approval by the end of January. The aim will be to get us to good/high performing standards by next summer.’ 	

	<p>The above set of proposals was unanimously approved by all attendees.</p> <p>CG advised that GG circulated the Board and Committee Work Plans and Meeting Schedule (enclosure 6). CG requested confirmation from attendees that they are comfortable with the proposed Work Plan and Meeting Schedule. The proposed Board and Committee Work Plans and Meeting Schedule was unanimously approved by all attendees.</p> <p>CG opened a discussion about the Clusters. CG advised that both him and the majority of the Trustees and Headteachers shared the view that they are not sure that Clusters are the right approach and either need to be restructured or replaced.</p> <p>The Board agreed to explore alternative arrangements.</p>	
<p>8)</p>	<p>Discussion of Gavins Board Report and Headteachers Reports</p> <p>CG invited GG to introduce his report and referred to the report documents (enclosures 2-4).</p> <p>GG advised that these reports are for information only at this point and to keep you up to date with what is going on within the schools. GG advised that the Autumn term is a long and difficult term, and that this year the first 6 weeks of term was spent integrating pupils back into school. GG advised that the schools have had to work in a ‘bubble’ situation due to COVID and staff haven’t been able to integrate right across the Board and the whole working environment has been abnormal and very challenging, and advised that this has put additional strain on the SLT’s. GG referred to the opening of Tiverton and advised that not only have the schools had to open under the above circumstances but the Trust has also doubled in size with double the amount of students and staff, whilst also training the new staff to the Trusts preferred methodologies. GG referred to Courtlands and the impact of COVID, staff have been absent, bubbles have collapsed and pupils have needed to self isolate, and because of this LE has needed to utilise agency staff with troubled children who do not assimilate new faces readily, and there has been an increased strain on staff who can still work. GG advised that Courtlands have done an extraordinary job under the circumstances in keeping as many children as they have in school, when a number of staff are either self isolating due to COVID or resigning under the pressure. GG advised that ACE exposure to COVID has fortunately been minimal, the exposure was in Exeter and only required one bubble to be collapsed and have coped since then. GG advised the biggest challenge has been MB having to deal with a student death at the beginning of the school year, which had a profound impact on students and staff. GG advised of a couple of suicide attempts at the end of last year from both students and staff and expressed that he feels the Trust are in a better position but feels there is still angst from COVID and lockdown.</p> <p>Board Members and executives discussed the Report of the CEO.</p> <p>CG expressed his thanks and appreciation to the executive team and the schools. KD expressed her thanks and appreciation, and feels that a letter from all Trustees expressing their gratitude and support should be written and sent to the Headteachers. CG agreed and is happy to write and send this on behalf of the Board.</p>	
<p>9)</p>	<p>AOB</p>	



Signed:

Clive Grace – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date:

26.01.21

Dates of Future Meetings:

DRAFT