

# Board Of Trustees Minutes

Date Of Meeting	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2016
Venue	ACE Schools, Bretonside   Training Room
Time	18:00 – 20:00

**Present:**

- Tim Searle - Chair
- Peter McDonnell – Vice Chair
- Sarah Gillett – Head Teacher / CEO
- Paul Turner – Head of Finance
- Joan Watkins – Trustee
- Hilary Ford – Clerk
- Sue Bickle – Chair of Governors | Courtlands School, Plymouth

Minutes Agreed By The Board and Signed By The Chair:

Signed: *Dr Tim Searle*

Date: Wednesday 21 September 2016

*Actual signed copy on file in the office.*

## 1. Apologies

Received from Alastair Wright and accepted.

Received from Annette Benny via email – working away in Leeds – accepted.

Received from Isabelle Morgan via emergency phone call – accepted.  
Joan Watkins to arrive late after a training event.

## 2. Chairman's Introduction | TS / SG (5 mins)

The Chair welcomed and introduced Sue Bickle from Courtlands School. Sue is the current Chair of Governors at Courtlands and will be attended all future Trustee meetings.

On the finalisation of the merger of ACE and Courtlands, Sue will be formally invited to join the board as a Trustee.

## 3. Verbal declarations of interest

None received

## 4. Approve minutes of the previous meeting

Approved, signed and dated by Chair.

## 5. Actions arising from previous meeting (10 mins)

**ACTION 1** – Head teacher / Head of Finance - will check the Articles of Association for terms of office. **Completed:** Information sent to Chair by Paul Turner – See excerpt from Articles of Association – will be included with documents and agenda for next meeting.

**ACTION 2** – Clerk - Please add this as a 'Pending Item' to be looked at again in June of next year (ref: 15/06/16 – Item 2 Action 2) – subject to clarification of point from Articles of Association. **Completed.**

**ACTION 3** – Head teacher – to clarify the use of names / initials instead of using Chair / Head / Trustee with Karen Powell. **Completed:** as far as Ofsted seeing Local Advisory Board minutes but for Trust Board minutes names can be included if the Trustees prefer as they will not be normally reviewed by Ofsted.

**ACTION 4** – Head of Finance - and head teacher will bring back a formal document of risk analysis. **Completed:** Will form part of Head of Finance report (Item 7 at next meeting)

**ACTION 5** – It would be good if our chair of Trustee's could meet with the chair of Governors from Courtlands. **Completed 28/06/2016**

**ACTION 6** – Keep Risk Register as regular item on the Agenda. **Completed**

**ACTION 7** – IT Strategy is being worked on, and hopefully will come to meeting in July. **Completed:** Will form part of Head of Finance report (Item 7 at next meeting)

**ACTION 8** – Meal after next meeting – The Stable – Clerk to book.

**Q** PM – Clarity of terms as I have been a governor for many years, so is this a 'new term of office'?

**A** SG/PT – Yes this will be 4 years from becoming registered with Companies house.

PT added that there is nothing in Article 64 to say that someone cannot re-stand for consecutive terms of office.

## 6. Update from the Head Teacher (15 mins)

### 1) SG – CEO Updates

Sarah gave an overview of notes issued to Trustees at the meeting this evening (**ACTION 1** - a copy of the CEO Updates will be sent to trustees unable to attend the meeting by the **clerk**).

- A meeting of Courtlands staff and ACE staff took place this afternoon for a cream tea – this was very well attended by both schools. A very successful afternoon.
- After discussing the training event booked for October, it was agreed that **ACTION 2** - **SG** will book rooms for the night before the Lanhydrock training event – enabling an early start on the first day's training.
- Great response to the internships from the staff. SG would like the successful staff to come and speak to the Trustees and the LGB, ideally early in the Autumn term. SG said it is a good model to 'grow our own leaders'.

Courtlands have a great model to follow with their leadership within the school and how it works with a head teacher...

**Q** TS – More of a mentoring idea than a curriculum based.

**A** SG – Yes when you train with PMQH they never cover how you work with staff, unions, governors etc., therefore we are looking to show our prospective leaders how life is as leader / head teacher.

We have appointed 3 of the positions – one in each area as per the update.

### 2) SG – Overview of Development of Potential Business: Swindon Previously Sent Out To Trustees

Cornwall are not happy with their current service provider equivalent to ACE (Acom) and are looking to use ACE.

Also, Cornwall would like a peripatetic specialist teaching team that can go from school to school with ASD students.

**Q** TS - Is anyone else doing this sort of thing?

**A** SG - No, not down here that we are aware of.

On the back of this we have been invited to a Market Place event in Swindon – Paul Winterton, Paul Turner and Tim Mathias will be representing ACE.

Swindon ideas/requests are similar to ideas we have received from Cornwall.

**Q** TS – What does that look like though in so much as will there be an ACE Swindon?

**A** SG - Probably yes as there is a moral question about children travelling from Swindon to Plymouth. Historically the area closed their PRU's and left them without a provision.

If you have thoughts about a Business plan, please call or email me, I would welcome any ideas you have.

## 7. Update from the Head of Finance (20 mins)

Overview of Finance Update previously sent out to Trustees, no questions were sent in advance.

### 1. Admin update

PT stated there is nothing new to report and welcomed any questions from the table.

**Q** PM – no negative impact on the budget from the changes?

**A** PT – no everything is written there and looking for agreement to make official.

### Trustees agreed with recommendation...

### 2. IT Strategy

This strategy will be a living document similar to the risk register as we may adopt new practices and as IT changes we can move with it – therefore allowing flexibility to change accordingly.

**PM** – A good IT strategy, the only thing I would comment on would be about having a server based back up if we are cloud based. Perchance there is an on-line crash – all documents are backed up.

**PT** – It would be good to investigate as we move forward as PS Financials and the accounting systems are in one place and school data will be consolidated in another area.

Other items which can't be fully consolidated and integrated are things like SIMS and individual school student records.

**Q** TS – Regarding scalability, will this be able to grow as we grow?

**A** PT – Yes, this has been at the forefront of our thinking, all the systems can grow i.e. Office 365 / SIMS / PS Financials ... as we do grow and have other schools join us, there are bound to be other systems that are different to ours and we will look at these system and programmes etc. and referring back to the IT strategy, should they prove to be a better system than we have in place it could be incorporated or would look at project managing the move of programmes should there be any number of years left on a contract.

**Q** TS – is there a start date...

**A** PT – it's part of the risk register and will be live and continually on-going.

**Q** PM – Asset replacement question with the 3 year hardware refresh...

**A** PT– Yes as things move forward we need to move with it – it's not necessarily hard and fast, keep reviewing and change when necessary.

### **Trustees agreed with recommendation....**

#### **3) Overview of Management Accounts sent to Trustees. No questions previously sent to Clerk.**

PT gave an overview of the document previously sent to Trustees.

- Further works are coming into play with some work to some of the internal doors at Bretonside and refurbishment works at Dover Road.
- Central costs slightly below budget.
- Legal costs accrued budget will come in below, the invoice will be presented in July and we'll start to see a benefit in costs from June onwards.
- £5k to be kept for Primary doubtful debts.
- Risks are manageable and there for Trustees to see.

### **Trustees agreed with recommendation....**

#### **4) Courtlands Due Diligence**

Overview of the Due Diligence report sent to trustees – no questions were sent to the Clerk in advance.

Courtlands are chasing PCC for the commissioning of the potential 6 places – they have it agreed verbally, however they are chasing for the written confirmation.

The spaces have been filled, so they will definitely be chasing for the money from PCC.

Having dealt with the EFA we know the questions they will ask and the figures they will look at are based on the ones from PCC – so there is a need to get the confirmation in writing.

Additional places and money – is best solution to the budget deficit, otherwise we will have to look at an action plan.

### **JW arrived 7:22pm**

The 2 risks for trustees to consider are;

- Uncertainty of the spaces and the monies coming from PCC
- Property buildings risk

**Q** JW – if PCC have commissioned the buildings survey would they fund any of the repairs needed.

**A** SG – No.

**No recommendations from Trustees are needed at this time.**

Financial risk – there will relevant nudges in the right directions to get the written confirmation.

**SB** - the 6 children have been taken on, should the monies not become available the staffing has been absorbed with current staffing levels.

Buildings risk – Details are laid out in the report, other quotes will be obtained once everything is settled.

## **8. Standing Items (if needed)** **(10 mins)**

**JW** – LGB meeting update

- One person couldn't attend due to previous holiday commitments.
- It was a really upbeat meeting, very positive
- One of the most exhilarating items was the link governor roles - no coercion was needed for people to put themselves forward for roles.
- The minutes will be forwarded to Trustees prior to the next meeting.

**Mark Parlett** – finance

**Claire Miller** – teaching and learning

**Brian Roberts** – SEND and disability

**Matthew Binden** – safeguarding / vice chair

**Rhoda Fairbank** – support Matthew Binden and has already requested training

**Joan Watkins** – teaching, learning and assessment.

**ACTION 3 - JW** will email all the Governors and thank for them for their enthusiasm and support.

Change to the suggested dates, due to others work commitments, the LGB meetings will be held on Thursdays instead of Tuesdays.

## 9. Dates of Trustee Meetings 2017

**TS** – Are you all happy with 6-8pm?

All agreed that it is, however the Head noted that she will be having 2 meetings back to back i.e. Trustees/LGB and it would be good to keep to the times whenever possible.

No meeting unless one is urgently needed for August – in which case the Chair / Head / Clerk will work together to ensure a conference call is arranged.

**Trustees agreed to accept all the dates.**

## 10. Leaf Kicking (20 mins)

TS overviewed the document previously sent out to trustee's

**Q** TS - How do we do this... i.e. not flip charts, where one person will walk off with the ideas at the end of the day, never to be seen or implemented again? We need a way to garner the collaborative thoughts and ideas.

When we have the training event in October – would it be possible to make some space for half an hour to go through this please. Things we can think about beforehand are;

- When and how often do we convene
- Do we include in this time at the end of a Trustee meeting
- Do we have separate meeting

**PM** – Regarding a separate meeting, I feel there would time constraints for people and adding another meeting.

**SG** – We could utilise technology more i.e. internal webinar which could be set up by our IT team.

Overview from TS of discussion;

- Use time at the end of the meeting
- Set some time aside during the weekend away at the Lanhydrock training session / set aside an afternoon once a term
- Any pressing matters use email

**SG** - We are all on the same moral compass and integrity, it's about how each of us has a responsibility, so there is someone to rely on to help get something done.

- I know you support me
- I know you have the moral compass
- I need to know / help with... i.e. a child needs to come to ACE, but it's a 2 hour journey, how do we support and make this happen.

## 11. AOB must be lodged with the clerk at least **48 hours before** the meeting.

- i. No other business forwarded to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

A couple of question brought to the table at the end of the meeting.

**Q** SB – asked a question of the Trustee's - currently there are 9 trustees, how will you incorporate the Chair of Courtlands, Chair of new free school or any other future schools?

**A** PT – When we established the articles of association it was with the current number, therefore what would happen – the trustees would vote on how many further trustees would be needed and the head of finance would amended the articles of association... it is imperative that the chair of each new lgb will be a trustee.

**Q** JW – Is the head happy with the level of support she is receiving?

**A** SG – Yes and thank you for asking.

## 12. Reserved Business (i.e. Part ii)

None for this meeting.

## Actions Arising

**Action 1 – Clerk** to email a copy of the CEO Updates to the Trustees unable to attend the meeting. **Completed**

**ACTION 2 – SG** to book rooms for the night before the Lanhydrock training event.

**ACTION 3 – JW** will email all the Governors (LGB) and thank for them for their enthusiasm and support. **Completed**