



never give up.

Trustee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 15th May 2019 at 6.00pm

ACE Schools MAT
Unit 3 Ensign House, Parkway Court,
Longbridge Road, Marsh Mills,
Plymouth PL6 8LR

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Tim Searle – Chair of Trustees
Mrs Annette Benny – Trustee
Mr Andrew Dunkley – Trustee
Mrs Sarah Gillett – Trustee and CEO
Mr Gavin Gracie – Trustee
Mr Peter McDonnell – Trustee
Mr Denis Parsons - Trustee.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Chris Humphries - Director of Performance ACE MAT
Mr Paul Turner - Director of Finance & CFO ACE MAT
Mr Paul Winterton - Director of School Improvement
Mrs Andrea Chick - Clerk to the Trustees/Administrator ACE MAT

APOLOGIES

None.

Signed:

Date:

1. **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

TS welcomed everyone, thanked all for attending and informed that DP was going to be a few minutes late.

2. **APOLOGIES**

None.

3. **VERBAL DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no verbal declarations of interest.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

4. **APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
27TH MARCH 2019**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on the 27th March 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

ACTION: Ensure there is a deadline for the actions and the discipline continues. **ALL.**

5. **MATTERS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

ACTION 1: Minute 6.2 CEO Update – Plymouth Challenge.

1. Trustees to watch the Panorama programme and read the Herald article to see how it feels to be in charge of something that is the only outstanding thing in Plymouth.
2. Trustees to send their thoughts to SG for consideration at the next meeting.

Still ongoing if not already done.

ACTION 2: Minute 6.4 CEO Update – Amalgamation.

1. AC to send out Premier Advisory report and SG's notes. **COMPLETED**
2. Executives to circulate a timeline before the end of term. See Wave 2 item 7.

ACTION 3: Minute 7 Ofsted Inspection. **TS** and **AC** to get a one page summary ready for the Plymouth Cluster meeting on 28th March 2019. **COMPLETED.**

ACTION 4: Minute 9.1 Tiverton Update. The **Executives** will feed back to the Trustees and send out emails post 12th and 26th April. **Covered in CEO update.**

ACTION 5: Minute 10.1 Connie Rothman Learning Trust. **PW** to put CRLT on the template. **Covered in CEO update.**

ACTION 6: Minute 13.1. Policies: **CH** to provide review dates. **COMPLETED.**

ACTION 7: Minute 15.1 Training Day for Academy Ambassadors. **PT** to forward details of the Development Day when he has them. **COMPLETED.**

ACTION 8: Minute 13. Policies. **CH** to send updated matrix for the next meeting. **COMPLETED.**

6. CEO UPDATE

6.1 **TS** pointed out a typing error in line 3 of the addendum as it should read 'used' and not 'sued'. Because of time restraints, **SG** invited any questions. **AB** asked about the Plymouth challenge and if the appetite is changing. **SG** thought that the issue of standards in the City is getting worse as there are a couple of primaries tipped into 'requires improvement' and some secondaries that haven't got much further to fall. Plymouth MP Jonnie Mercer looking to take over the lead on Social Mobility through Education as apparently this is being endorsed by the DfE. **SG** has met with Judith Harwood and as the issue is getting worse with pressure on colleagues building, **SG** is talking with those that might require our support. The work with Ted Wragg in February was very positively well received but it's a very slow progress. She also had a meeting with Government on exclusions which is very current.

6.2 Connie Rothman:

TS asked if this has been shelved even though a great deal of work has been done on this. **SG** explained that the Executives felt morally as well as professionally to go back to them with an explanation and to advise them to look closer to home, at someone who could deliver more quickly and we would support them with this. Edward Rothman is still looking at working with the Trust and continues to keep in communication with **SG** on a regular basis. She has had no current discussions with Executives on this but they all still see the moral and commercial pay-off but it's not going to happen overnight. **PW** advised that CRLT were looking for support in finding different premises which is very large material support we would have to give, but without a very strong prospect of getting the URN it doesn't make financial sense. **SG** will speak to him at the weekend as it won't impact on work time. Following an RSC office conference call they are still interested in the URN for Bournemouth and we are asking RSC for a steer in writing to give us a concrete idea of what to do.

6.3 Addendum:

TS agreed that sadly it is time to part company with Seymour House and hoped that this could be done cleanly. **SG** advised that we have a desire to this both legally and to end on a good relationship which we have always strove to do, notwithstanding a more pragmatic push back from Hamoaze around financials. **PT** explained that we working with support from Michelmores as we wanted to extricate early as the lease ended in September 2019. The North Hill transition will not affect year 11 who

have exams and other years will be moved in a phased way after half term. This will 20 children without year 11s, with capacity once open for approximately 50. The challenge has been the condition of the premises. **PT** is working on a plan to get extricate without high costs but we are liable for rent until the end of September 2019 along with a small amount of remedial work. **AB** asked that if we are paying solicitors what the breaking point is against costs. **PT** advised that the rent is £14,000 to the end of September with the solicitors sending the odd letter with some advice to us. **SG** wants to keep on good terms with them.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees had read and accepted the CEO's report.

7. WAVE 2 – PRESUMPTION FREE SCHOOLS & EOIs – BUSINESS CASE

7.1 **TS** thought it was a good start having the summaries for each project with a couple of tweaks that **TS** and **PW** have discussed. **TS** feels he loses tracks of all the projects so he has devised a form to be filled in with all the current prospects that are being dealt with and decisions to be made.

It was **AGREED** to use this form.

7.2 **TS** asked that it be made clear what decision the Board needs to arrive at and what decisions the Executive are expecting from the Board.

SG requested a firm direction on which of the opportunities to follow through to an Expression of Interest stage. This has to be registered as soon as possible, then progress ~~to an Eoi form and then~~ the full application submitted by September 30 2019.

TS pointed out that would it mean committing to a body of work.

SG agreed that it would be committing to a fairly in-depth piece of work stream both strategically and administratively. Also consider the engagement of consultants and how they can finesse and support applications around risk management and financial input.

TS showed a map of the geographical spread of the proposed free schools.

SG thinks that we should stick to our strengths. Michelmores have strongly advised from the outset to consider entering into a gentlemen's agreement with WAVE which they suggest would benefit both Trusts. It's a consideration from a moral point of view and feels clunky but politics come into how things are 'carved' up, however this still doesn't mean that we will get the Plymouth bid.

SG has met with Judith Harwood Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Communities at Plymouth CC on a regular basis and we have completed pieces of work for her. **SG** put Jo Siney Head of SEND at Plymouth CC in touch with Premier to help her understand the Wave 2 process and that we have declared an interest. Alison Nettleship Head teacher of Weston Mill Community Primary School has also been in touch with Premier who have knocked them back. Plymouth CC are encouraging other Trusts but nothing is a done deal at the moment. Mount Tamar remains maintained so cannot sponsor even if they support Alison's Trust so unless they are planning to convert they can't run as a Trust.

AB asked if there were two other Trusts and **SG** confirmed there were, Discovery, WAVE and Reach South West which is an arm of the Reach Trust.

AB asked if we know anything about any of the others ~~in the running~~.

PT attended the Cornwall and **North** Somerset Open Days. **North** Somerset is a small LA with two or three other possible interested parties. Learn@ who run four or five special schools in Bristol will put in a bid, quite critical around some of the financial elements. Cabvot were there just to see what's going on and have plenty on their plate at the moment. Engage Trust run a couple of high level special schools in South Gloucestershire but wouldn't really fit in; other special schools are all maintained.

PW advised that following discussions on the 20 questions and the scoring he will send around a slightly revised version. There is not a huge difference in the scores but we need to ensure the weighting on the scores is correct. All six of the EoIs should be within our core interest and now we need to consider the physical and mental capacity required and the likelihood that if we put in for 6, would we get 6 bearing in mind the geographic distances. There has been no confirmation of where they are all going to be located so it could be strategically difficult to run quite small schools with no prospect of a hub. The indication is aiming for 4 closer ones would make more sense. We would be unlikely to get 4, however we know that whereas the LAs don't have the final say, the Secretary of State for Education does. The LAs have some input by taking part in the interviews and express their preferences but the SSfE may make a different decision. If we don't go for 4, we're not in the race.

DP asked if we went for 4, could we end up with none.

SG thinks we would be successful on at least 1 as we are in the market as Tiverton is seen as an excellent example.

DP asked what would be a good outcome.

PW suggested that 2 would be ideal, and in project terms would be over 2-3 years to opening as they are green field sites at the moment. After completing initial pre-registration forms these are published on the LA website which will give a clear idea of who is interested.

PT advised that **North** Somerset gives more flexibility with opening approximately September 20-21 and discussions with the provider could take it to 2022.

TS believed that the business case and processes are now becoming clearer.

DP enquired have we the ability to put 4 **full** bids in regarding workload.

PW advised that we would then consider engaging the consultants.

GG is concerned that huge pressure is on to get Tiverton ready for early September and this is the same time as the closing date for all of these bids. Given the overhead time for Executives, where is the Executive time this year.

PW informed the closest similar piece of work is Tiverton which was turned around in the given timeframe of 2.5 weeks with input from the consultants.

SG would hesitate to use the same method and manner for these bids and other free schools. The motivation for Tiverton came from political acknowledgement as we'd come straight off the back of STC which was not successful and that we should pursue Tiverton. This did create a lot of work in a short amount of time and we used Premier and Michelmores to great effect; we were reactive to a situation and opportunity and want to make sure that we aren't in the same situation.

GG thought the critical point is we have 4 Executives, which is a finite amount of horse power and a limited time frame to achieve two mission critical situations. Constraints are whether we want to do 6 but how many can we do.

PT advised from previous experience, the summary conclusion is do two in house and outsource the two that are unknown to the consultants. Regarding the timing, we are where we are, the challenge in Tiverton is nearly completed but Wave 2 could be ongoing for the next 5 or 10 years.

AD enquired how is a consultant led bid compared to an individual bid.

SG advised the commissioners don't know who puts together the actual bid. **PW** will spend the majority of his time winding up Tiverton with the Head teacher and staff. We would do the initial short forms in house, with the larger pieces of work at the end of summer holidays and into September split ~~the~~ between consultants and the Executive and can be worked electronically or in the office. The Executives would commit to working around sequences and delegation. This is an opportunity that doesn't come around every day. 4 seems comfortable with in terms of capacity to keep the work at the very best quality, especially Tiverton.

GG was concerned that capacity comes down to cost because the more time the Executives don't have the more Premier will have to do. Even if Premier did all the bids, the Executives would still have interface with them so you don't ever lose your input. If there is a further delay at Tiverton that hits at the critical week as it will be over the beginning of September period so would this be manageable.

PW advised bids could be withdrawn if Tiverton was delayed again as there's no penalty even after putting in the final application or after interview stage so have opt out points at any stage.

AB asked how this compares to last year.

PW explained they only had two weeks to complete the form as requested by the LA and the process happened really quickly and not very clearly. This is a longer process which gives longer to process the risks.

CH confirmed that regarding capacity, we have been through the process before which didn't proceed because of the numbers of pupils quoted by the LA was incorrect. LAs now have to prove their numbers to the DfE before the process starts. We have a blueprint ready to go which can be used to enable a quick turnaround. A new Head teacher is starting at Bretonside and new one already based in Tiverton who both will need support. Regarding salaries and employing a consultants the Executives are working on other things too.

DP stated the Trustees have to trust the Executives on what they can do, can challenge on their assurances but at the end of the day can hold the Executives to account.

AD told the Executives that if they were confident they could carry out this work he would prefer them to go ahead and submit the bids, but if there is an issue with Tiverton and felt that they needed more help from the Consultants then spend a little more money to get it done as it's an investment in the future.

SG would rather work to a general budget and get them to do all the work.

PW advised there are two way markers before the end of Summer term, F&A and E&S committees.

AB asked if the list of the bidders are on the website and if others bidders may withdraw.

PW advised the lists of potential bidders gets published on the LA web sites

GG would like to put in EoIs-Pre-application registrations on all 6 (7 including Glendinning House) but only follow up on four.

SG will get some feedback from Premier Advisory to see how this would work politically.

GG is concerned there isn't the capacity for 6 bids.

PW suggested this would give the choice of which ones to take further.

CH advised there are further visits to the LAs to come.

AD thinks you've got to be in to win it and to make ourselves known.

TS knows that everyone understands the capacity value.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to put in pre-~~opening application~~ registration for all 6 LAs subject to:

1. A partial spend with consultants which is moveable ie pro-rata consultancy of £20,000 ~~plus a little more if required for 2 bids~~ across 4 most local LAs as recommended. To return to Trustees should more consultancy spend be required.
2. Submit ~~EoIs~~ Full Applications for 4 schools plus Glendinning House.
3. If the response from Premier Advisory comes back favourable then put ~~bids~~ pre-applications in for 6 plus Glendinning House. *(Following the meeting SG contacted Tom Legge at Premier Advisory who advised that putting in a number of early initial ~~EoIs~~ pre-application registrations is a well-used power play and acceptable.)*

8. **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

8.1 Report of F&A Chairman: The meeting due on the 1st May 2019 was postponed due the committee not being quorate. The Chair's report for the F&A meeting on the 15th May 2019 was circulated at the beginning of the meeting. **TS** asked for clarification on the unsuccessful CIF bids for Courtlands. **PT** advised that can't produce any further information for an appeal and decisions can be varying and quite controversial. He doesn't know if there is a change in the system but hopefully we will be able to bid again in September especially now the condition survey has been completed. The adjoining bungalow to the Exeter site has a planning application for educational use pending and the significant change needs to be approved by the RSC office. **SG** advised that the RSC want her to have a conference call with them and DCC regarding permanent provision and she sees no risk on this. RSC will support both parties and all looks positive. **PT** explained that the reconfiguration of the central MAT budget and impact on top slice is likely to be as staff currently funded by ASP are moved to central budget. Top slice of 12% (ASP) and 7% (Courtlands and Tiverton) are likely and the team are working through budgets at the moment with teachers pay and pension increases also being a big challenge.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees had read and accepted the Chair of the F&A Committee on 15th May 2019 report.

8.2 ACE Schools MAT – Finance report.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the report of the F&A Director for March 2019.

9. **ACE SCHOOLS TIVERTON**

9.1 ACE Schools Tiverton Update:

PW advised the same report went to F&A and E&S. Staff interviews were held today with 5 teachers and 5 TAs appointed and offers going out tomorrow. Agreement has been received from DCC and agreed by solicitors for the release of the first part of the furniture and equipment funding. **TS** queried the delay and how this will affect the official opening

with Peter Jones. **PW** confirmed that the completion date is still 23rd August. Agreement for furniture to be delivered to site from July is in place and a storage container placed on site where items can be delivered. All new staff have agreed to start from the 27th August to make use of the block of time to carry out induction work that was going to be spread over the summer. **TS** asked what will happen if there is an unforeseen event. **PW** said that DCC and the builders can't see why there will be a delay again as previous delays were down to equipment supply and weather. A meeting had been held with DCC so they know they can't afford to delay again and risks have now reduced considerably, so barring anything drastic, it shouldn't happen as far as possible. **TS** confirmed that in **PW**'s view the risk that we need another plan B is very low. **AB**'s experience of problems with building projects can be fire regulations and their sign offs before opening and it is useful to have the builders around to get any problems sorted. **PW** confirmed that fire regulations are part of the pre-handover the builders will do with DCC so they will still be there. Also, a School's Fire Risk Assessment is booked for 27th August 2019. **AB** also asked if there is a named person who will take responsibility for the receipt of furniture and goods. **PW** advised the site manager will do this and he will check again to confirm this; staff members will also be around on site. Furniture costs have been underestimated going up from £100,000 to £200,000 so discussions are taking place with DCC and they asked if there is anywhere cuts could be made to the shopping list which is currently at £2860,000. SG has an informal meeting with female DCC Leaders and she will bring this up then.

It was **RESOLVED** to note and accept the Tiverton update report.

10. TRUST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) REPORT

10.1 KPI Report March 2019: No update as same as previous figures.

11. EDUCATION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE 6th MARCH 2019

11.1 Chair's Report:

DP reported that there have been significant improvements across the board with no major issues. A decision was taken to use City and Guilds training as it will be more flexible for our needs. More representatives are needed for the Cornwall Cluster and Trustees were asked to see if they could find anyone that would be interested.

It was **RESOLVED** to note and accept the summary report of the E&S Committee of the 8th May 2019.

ACTION: Suggested names for Cornwall Cluster to be given to AC. **3 weeks. ALL**

12. PEOPLE STRATEGY

12.1 **CH** reported that he had received information regarding a Times Educational supplement piloting scheme which is free until December 2019. It is seen as an impartial scheme which takes the staff pulse at the time. **PM** informed that a similar scheme was used with a company he worked with which was flexible and amenable and he suggested a few questions will be asked each week rather than all at once. **DP** also found these schemes extremely useful in the past and asked if this one is able to correlate against the rest of the population, **CH** confirmed that it will as it's a national scheme. **DP** asked that a plan is formed so when the results come through actions are taken to put plans in place to address any issues; this works well when members of the SLT are directly involved. **CH** hopes to launch the scheme as part of the People Strategy. Feedback re the launch of the People Strategy is to have the input of the Trustees to show that this initiative is coming from the top. **AD** advised that on average, if half the people are happy and half are not, it will show the average are happy and how will this be shown. **CH** advised that you can have feedback on comments and the SLT can respond but it still stays confidential.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the questions and run the scheme as a pilot until December.

13. **POLICIES**

13.1 Policy Matrix.

It was **RESOLVED** to note and accept the policy report and matrix.

13.2 ACE Schools MAT Exclusions Policy.

GG noted that the website is out of date regarding Trustees and policies. **CH** advised that this is an ongoing issue and PLMR have been commissioned by SG to reviewing all websites and are currently working on the teething issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Exclusions Policy.

Part 2.

None.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

Pending Items:

Item	Date Added (meeting date)	Review Date
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Terms of Office – length of service		
Policy review	Ongoing	
Trustees meeting dates	See below	
Trustee Work plan		

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 10th July 2019 18.00-20.00

ACTIONS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 15TH MAY 2019

Minute Number	Action	Who	Date to be completed by
5. 6.2 CEO Update – Plymouth Challenge.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees to watch the Panorama programme and read the Herald article to see how it feels to be in charge of something that is the only outstanding thing in Plymouth. Trustees to send their thoughts to SG for consideration at the next meeting. 	Trustees	Continuing
4. Previous minutes - Actions.	Ensure there is a deadline for actions and the discipline continues.	ALL	Continuing
11. Education and Safeguarding Committee.	Suggested names for the Cornwall Cluster to be given to AC.	ALL	5 th June 2019