



never give up.

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 22nd January 2020
at 14.00

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

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Annette Benny – Chair of the Board of Trustees.
Mr Andrew Dunkley – Trustee.
Mr Gavin Gracie – Trustee and CEO.
Mr Peter McDonnell – Trustee.
Dr Tim Searle – Trustee.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Andrea Chick – PA to the CEO/Clerk to the Trustees/Administrator ACE MAT.
Mrs Anna Rumsby – Finance Manager.
Ms Beccy Woods – Estate and Compliance Manager.
Mr Dan Ayling – Deputy Head Teacher Tiverton.
Mrs Hannah Smart – Head of ACE Tiverton.
Mrs Jo Warn – HR Manager.
Mrs Karen Felix – IT Manager.
Mr Lee Earnshaw – Head of Courtlands.
Mr Matt Bindon – Head of ACE Schools Plymouth.
Mr Peter Cubbon – nominated new Trustee.
Mrs Ruth Westwood – Deputy Head Teacher ASP.

APOLOGIES:

Mr Denis Parsons – Trustee.

Minute No.	Agenda Item	Action
1	<p>SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST REGISTER.</p> <p>AB welcomed everyone as her first meeting as Chair and thanked TS for his hard and involved work over the previous 3 years. Introductions were made around the table. No additional declarations of interest.</p>	
2	<p>CO-OPTION OF NEW TRUSTEE PETER CUBBON.</p> <p>i. Peter Cubbon's biography had been circulated prior to the meeting. AB proposed and GG seconded. A meeting with the Members will be held in the next few weeks to formally appoint PC and to re-appoint AB, TS and PM.</p> <p>It was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Peter Cubbon be co-opted to the Board of Trustees.</p>	
3.	<p>APPOINTMENT OF NEW AUDITORS.</p> <p>i. Following the tendering process in December 2019, a panel consisting of AD, AB, GG, PM and AR had received presentations from three auditors this morning who tendered for the internal and external audit assurances for ACE Schools MAT. One candidate was fairly new to educational auditing and would work with us closely, one was already heavily involved and industry leaders, and the other concentrated either on internal or external rather than both. The interview panel recommended the tender of Bishop Fleming as experienced educational auditors. At the AGM held on 18th December 2019 minute 7, the Members resolved to allow the Trustees to appoint the new auditors in January 2020.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to appoint Bishop Fleming be appointed as the ACE MAT auditors for the coming 4 years.</p>	
4.	<p>STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>i. GG reported that he had been informed the Trust had been unsuccessful with the Wave 2 schools due to concerns over governance no further advancement would be agreed until improvements were seen. An SRMA will visit to advise on best use of resources.</p> <p>ii. The DfE and ESFA have invited GG, AB and the Heads to a catch up and review at Bristol on the 4th February 2020. GG welcomed this meeting to introduce AB and the Heads. They are asking if the educational input and strategic plan have been completed as everything needs to be done by this plan.</p> <p>iii. GG outlined the MAT's reporting structure and how it works. A skills audit will be undertaken of the Board and performance appraisals for the last year at Board and sub-committee level</p> <p>ACTION: GG will investigate for skills audit forms on the Key or NGA.</p> <p>ACTION: Trustees to complete by the 29th January 2020.</p> <p>iv. The Trust require additional Trustees and Cluster members with recruitment continuing. The process of recruiting Cluster members in Devon and Plymouth is continuing well but no-one has volunteered in Cornwall. Once a form of strategy has been agreed today, it has to be carefully thought through and fed down to the sub-committees but avoid continually repeating reports, change the document flow and get reports pertinent and to the point. AB asked if the next steps for the Clusters, will</p>	<p>GG</p> <p>ALL</p>

come from the KPI. **GG** confirmed it will and the overall key is there are many broken parts with the MAT but good Ofsted inspections and school performances so the MAT must be in a position to roll out where we are, cleaned up processes and start afresh so things need sorting quickly for 1st September 2020. There are some big projects on the go at the moment which is only a start.

- v. Recommending a Strategy: **GG** reported development work has been carried out internally with some processes already underway eg websites which have been commissioned and will be delivered by the end of March 2020. Time has been spent on individual and corporate development work, the latest being last week developing strategy around rebranding of the Trust. At the moment the Trust is called ACE Schools MAT then ACE Schools Plymouth, so when people interface with the MAT the differentiation between Trust and Schools is lost and is becoming more difficult when spread out across several counties. There are many legacy issues and at the moment it would do a great deal of good to think again where the MAT currently is ie what is it we are, what is our basic core function. The MAT identifies very strongly with the end of SEN education as pupils are taken that no one else can deal with and the MAT is making a huge success of this. The Vision Statement should include 'we do this day in and day out, Transforming Lives for pupils, parents, staff and society'; a particularly powerful message that we are not an alternative comprehensive education establishment or an adverse childhood experience academy. Transform Futures are outward looking and put children first and foremost in everything we do.

GG and **MB** met with Tony Bloxham of SW Region National Teaching Council this week. His analysis of what is happening is the whole Plymouth economy has been skewed within education and been pushed into the low end of the market. **TB** has identified the problem centred around PCC and the interactions there, so the ESFA is working with the CEO at PCC to drive forward and make changes. Academies have come up with solutions to impose back on to the commissioners so we are in the middle of a political firestorm and need to tread carefully.

TB asked about our governance directly so this needs to be urgently looked at. **AB** felt this is becoming a habitual comment about ACE so what evidence do we take on the 4th February to show the ESFA that we have been working on and improving our governance. **TS** advised they may ask how we would make sure what happened last year doesn't happen again. **AD** thought it's not about governance, it's about the previous CEO leaving, the executives have gone, a poor audit report, is the leadership going to be around next year; they are being very indirect with their language and using 'governance' as a label.

GG explained this situation has arisen because previously everything had to come and go through the executives. The systems and processes are not cutting edge as there hasn't been the money or the provision to do so, central services has been trying hard to keep up, buildings and resources not always suitable for the child and the staff. Some services are being redesigned by talking to Delt to find a better way of doing things and setting clear strategies. Central services need to be developed to be effective so academies and people will want to join the Trust. Various options are being looked at currently with recommendations given for purchase systems and controls being the pivot point. **GG** is very clear with the dialogue from the DfE and ESFA as they would like to see a permanent CEO.

GG left the meeting so this could be discussed.

- vi. CEO Position: **AB** confirmed the DfE is anxious because the Trust only has an interim CEO and wants to know the plan. She has spoken with **GG** about this around timing as a permanent CEO needs to be in place.

It was **AGREED** to:

	<p>a) Be clear what is needed and within this, lean shared central services. b) Using educational improvement and pull from the best, can we get better. c) Support the Heads in teaching the young people. d) Start to define the CEO role which would then enable AB, GG and the Heads when they visit RSC and DfE in February to have something to present them with and test it with them with a view to running a process. e) A full and transparent process for the recruitment of a substantive Chief Executive will be run.</p> <p>ACTION: AB to email out description and vision. ACTION: TRUSTEES who are CEOs discuss and work on a draft job description to take to the RSC meeting on the 4th February.</p>	
5.	<p>PART II</p> <p>i. Strategic Plan: GG presented his plan to the Trustees and it was RESOLVED to continue with the recruitment of governors.</p> <p>RESOLVED to rebrand ACE Schools MAT using 'Transforming Futures' as a strapline but not as the new name.</p> <p>RESOLVED to continue with the direction of travel around central services but not to finalise at the moment.</p> <p>ii. Role of the CEO.</p> <p>Please see minute 4 vi.</p>	
6.	<p>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.</p> <p>There was no any other urgent business.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 16.40.</p>	

Signed:

Date:

Chair

Dates of Future Meetings:

Wednesday 12 th February 2020	18.00 – 20.00
Wednesday 25 th March 2020	18.00 – 20.00
Wednesday 20 th May 2020	18.00 – 20.00
Wednesday 15 th July 2020	18.00 – 20.00

Board of Trustees:

Annette Benny	Chair of Trustees.
Andy Dunkley	Trustee.
Denis Parsons	Trustee.
Gavin Gracie	Trustee/CEO.
Peter McDonnell	Trustee.
Peter Cubbon	Trustee
Tim Searle	Trustee.