



Trustees' Full Board Meeting
Monday 19th July 2021 – 6pm
Spring Common Academy

MINUTES

Present: Kim Taylor, Executive Head (KT) Sue Bailey (Chair)
 Mark Williams (MW) Wayne Palmer (WP)
 Jay Browning (JB) Keith Strong (KS)
 Mike Wescott Rudd (MWR)

In Attendance: Nathalie Watkins (Clerk) Genevieve Cowcher (GC), Finance Manager

| No. | Minutes | Actions |
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| 1. | <p><u>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone and expressed how nice it was to see people in person.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Rebecca Ward, Taff Gidi and Lynda Adam. Ilker Yoney was not present.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate with over 3 Trustees present.</p> | |
| 2. | <p><u>DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u></p> <p>None</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></p> <p>DECISION: The minutes from the FBT meeting on 17th June 2021 were approved and the Chair signed a copy.</p> <p>DECISION: The minutes from the FPP meeting on 21st June 2021 were approved and KS signed a copy as he had chaired this meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: As the TLW Committee minutes from 22nd June had not yet been circulated to all Trustees the approval of these minutes will take place at the</p> | Clerk |

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Signed.....(Chair) Date.....

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| | next TLW Committee meeting. | |
| 4. | <p><u>MATTERS ARISING AND AGREED ACTIONS UPDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLW points of information for FBT – KT summarised that the Committee looked at both schools’ priorities for 2021/22 and that she has revisited curriculum, operations delivery, fire safety and safeguarding at RMA and advised on changes which RMA have welcomed and actioned so that they will now be able to sustain the processes. The Committee saw RMA safeguarding audit. Chair advised that lots of documents came to this Committee meeting that would not normally, but RMA wanted to share their work and the AAGs are not currently established enough to review these so the TLW needs to maintain some operational overview as well as strategic. • FPP points of information for FBT – The budget is set for further discussion this evening and this had made up the majority of the FPP meeting. <p><i>External Governance Review</i> as a future item for FBT agenda. Chair explained that the revised Financial Handbook advocated Boards do this so she had felt that it was something that the Board should consider in the future. Now is not the time to do this as the AAGs are still in development and the Trust is advertising for Members and Trustees. A Trustee enquired what the purpose of this was and for whose benefit. Chair explained that it was to assess how the Trust is governing and it could be used as evidence for Ofsted when they review governance. A Trustee asked if Days (internal auditors) could do this for HEdT. This is a possibility but can be investigated when the time is right.</p> <p>ACTION: Add as a future agenda item to the FBT agendas</p> <p><i>Review of Scheme of Delegation</i> by FPP next term. KS explained that the revised Financial Handbook advised Board’s revisit their scheme of delegation after any significant changes. HEdT has moved from 1 to 2 schools so it would be appropriate to review it even if just to confirm it is still valid. ACTION: Clerk to add to next FPP agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair confirmed that she has fed back to the internal auditor on report queries. Days have advised how to publish Exec Head salary on the website – it | <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> |

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| | <p>should be a single statement with the accounts and simply needs to show the staff name and band range. Chair confirmed that she has provided Days with an update on the Trust's work on salary structure and the additional information requested in the report. Days have provided Chair with the most up to date advice on Exec leaders' salary structure. Chair concluded that Caroline from Days had been extremely helpful and was very knowledgeable on the latest legislation and guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Trustees to submit a photo and bio for the website. KT confirmed she has no template for this, she just wants any info Trustees wish to be displayed about themselves. • KT confirmed that she would create and circulate a branding document stipulating guidelines around the naming of future school so the situation does not arise as with RMA where names were being suggested before the Board had decided on parameters. ACTION: KT to circulate the brand guidelines for school names <p>1. 2021/22 meeting dates</p> <p>Trustees discussed that Committee meetings would no longer be held in the same week as this causes pressures on KT preventing document provision in time and on clerk in completing two sets of minutes. DECISION: It was agreed that a mix of virtual and in person meetings should be held. It was agreed that the November FPP meeting should be in person as well as strategy meetings. One TLW meeting a term would be held in person and this would rotate between the two schools. ACTION: Clerk to amend current proposal to take location into account and then circulate.</p> | <p>All Trustees</p> <p>KT</p> <p>Clerk</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p><u>BOARD OF TRUSTEES MAKE UP FOR 2021 AND BEYOND</u></p> <p>2. Members</p> <p>Governors for Schools have confirmed that they can support with Member recruitment. ACTION: Chair to liaise with them about the two vacancies.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that they had made good progress with Members this year as the key aim was to ensure that Members were separate from Trustees and now all three members are non-Trustees. This separation was the most important</p> | <p>Chair/Clerk</p> |

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change. Moving from 3 to 5 Members is a good step but the key priority has been met.

3. Trustee Number Maintenance

As of 20th July, there will be 9 Trustees (including KT). Chair informed Trustees that due to a change in personal circumstances Bernard Curran has had to resign as a Trustee. Chair has amended the Academy Ambassadors advert to reflect the additional needs of the Trust.

4. Vacancies/Appointments required

- Safeguarding Lead Trustee for 2021/22 - still TBC
- Clerk – Clerk updated the Board that the Camclerk service have not currently found a replacement for her, but they do have a recruitment campaign live at present. Clerk assured Trustees that she is working for the Board until the end of August so will finish everything up from this year and set up what she can for next year.
- AAG Chairs – this is still to be sorted

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair(s) for 2021/22 academic year

MW had only been voted in as vice chair at the last Board meeting but for the correctness of procedure a Trustee nominated Mark Williams for the role of Vice Chair, and this was seconded, no one else put their name forward for the role. **DECISION: Mark Williams will take the Vice Chair of Trustees role for Horizons Education Trust for the academic year 2021/22.**

Clerk asked the Chair to leave the room having clarified that she wished to remain in the role. No one else put themselves forward for the role. Clerk asked Trustees to vote to keep the current Chair. **DECISION: Trustees voted unanimously to have Sue Baily as Chair to the Board of Trustees for Horizons Education Trust for the academic year 2021/22.**

6. Agree Committees' Memberships

With several Trustees absent and the Academy Ambassadors advert currently live it was decided to wait to next term to confirm who would sit on each Committee. Chair acknowledged that MWR had previously agreed to sit on

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| | <p>both committees as a temporary measure while the Board was short on TLW skill set Trustees. MWR was pleased that Chair had remembered this and agreed to continue with the arrangement so long as it was still seen as a temporary measure. Several Trustees discussed that although it was useful having certain skill sets for the Committees it did not preclude others sitting on the Committees. ACTION: Clerk to add to FBT meeting agenda for October.</p> <p>7. Appointment of Chairs of Committees</p> <p>As both Chairs had sent apologies it was decided to postpone this to the first Committee meetings of next term. ACTION: Clerk to add to agenda for FPP and TLW Committee meetings in September.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> |
| 6. | <p><u>FINANCE</u></p> <p>GC explained to Trustees that her finance report contained 3 elements that the Board needed to approve or amend today for the submission deadline to the ESFA on 26th July.</p> <p>1) Forecast Outturn from 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>This consists of the full year for SCA and 4 months for RMA and the Central team covering from the date of transfer.</p> <p><u>SCA</u> – GC is confident that this is a robust forecast as the accruals and prepayments usually offset each other and can be predicted. The forecast is showing a £58k surplus before depreciation. A Trustee enquired why it was a bigger surplus than when it was reviewed by the FPP. GC explained that the external auditors had advised that the Trust clear down the restricted funds, as much as possible, and GC has been able to do this bringing them down to £0.</p> <p><u>Central</u> forecast - GC is also confident with this forecast of a flat end of year.</p> <p><u>RMA</u> – This is forecasting an outturn of £114k though GC is less sure on this as the income from out of area funding still needs to be received. GC has email trails from TBAP but not specific guarantees of the funding. Since issuing invoices there have been queries raised so reinvestigation and renegotiation may be required. GC does not feel that this funding is reliable or certain so has adapted the budget to allow for 33% of this funding to be written off as bad debts. A Trustee asked what recourse the Trust have. KT explained that there was the possibility of debt recovery or discussions with the DfE, but the Trust</p> | |

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would need to be sure that they wanted to go down that route. With regards to expenditure the staffing plan is robust and now the school has been part of the Trust for 3 months KT and GC have a better idea of running costs.

Trustees asked why there was no depreciation figure for RMA. The depreciation figures will be confirmed in 4-8 weeks by LGSS (for CCC), for SCA GC has been able to estimate these based on previous years but she does not have this information for RMA. Trustees suggested she could create an estimate based on a similar percentage structure to SCA. GC explained to Trustees that the forecast is submitted before pensions and depreciation figures are confirmed. GC explained that the pensions figure is last year's but the Trust can have no impact on this figure it is simply told it. A Trustee queried whether the DfE minded this estimated process and GC explained that this was the same for every academy. Trustees felt that the use of last year's figures was acceptable for pensions but queried why last year's figures or an estimate is not used for depreciation rather than putting nothing in. GC explained that the return is done at a Trust level rather than individual school.

DECISION: It was agreed that an estimated depreciation and pensions figure should be put in for RMA.

2) Budget

SCA - It has been challenging to get SCA's budget to break even, funding continues to be eroded with less being given than in previous years. Julia McIntosh has put together a staffing structure that is lean on agency staff like this year but with a standing member of staff employed to cover wherever required. A 1.5% pay award for support staff has been built in even though this has been rejected by unions. The budget is going to be challenging for JM.

RMA – The school's funding has a volatility that GC and KT are not used to dealing with, pupil come and go much quicker bringing and then removing large amounts of funding very quickly. KT intends to try and reduce the number of these students but a line in the budget has been added to deal with this volatility. There is no budget built in for vacancies (unlike at SCA) it is based purely on the staff employed at the time of the build however any slack in funding will be put to agency staff if needed. Once GC has a clearer understanding of the volatility and the staffing structure has been reviewed,

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she will start to look with the HT at moving agency funds into permanent salary. A Trustee queried where this line was on the budget – A. 'Educational Support – Other'. RMA's budget is much easier to balance than SCA and GC and KT would recommend that any surplus is retained to start to build up a reserves fund.

3) 3-year Forecast

The key difference between next year's budget and years' 2 and 3 is almost wholly based on salary increases as income is projected to stay the same, if not fall. A 1% pay award for teachers and support staff will create a deficit.

Trustees who had been on the Board this time last year explained to newer Trustees that the Board had decided that it was important to show the ESFA what the future would bring if funding isn't increased rather than patching the deficit with reserves. Ultimately HEdT would not be able to submit a deficit in year budget if they had reserves but the Board had taken the decision to submit a deficit for yr 2 and 3. A Trustee asked how likely is it that yr 2 could be flat. GC said it would be tough to get flat but would be dependent on the pupil mix however she wanted to point out that pupils with the same needs are now getting less SEND funding from Cambridgeshire County Council so if the pupil mix stayed the same the funding is still likely to go down. KT emphasised to Trustees that it was vital that at the centre of these discussions safeguarding and quality of education are considered. The EHCP process enables the school to discuss and debate funding as CCC funding model is based on evidence of needs. GC explained that the yr 2 and 3 forecast requirement was better suited and designed for standard schools rather than special schools. **DECISION: Trustees agreed that it was important to show that if income is flat, but salary costs rise due to pay awards the Trust cannot provide for what they believe is adequate staffing for safeguarding and quality of education within the budget.**

KT told Trustees that HEdT are sitting on more reserves than any other special school she knows however it is right to try and work within budget every year. If the deficit is paid from reserves each year, there is no capacity for growth. KT explained that SCA were taking on an extra 5 pupils in Sept taking them up to 200 students.

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See also confidential minutes part A

DECISION: Trustees agreed not to change the budget and to approve the outturn forecast, budget and 3-year forecast.

4) Staff absence Insurance

GC asked Trustees for some guidance regarding the renewal of the staff absence insurance. Increasingly they are reticent to pay out and this year the policy cost £20k and the pay outs were to a value of £9k therefore it was not cost effective. *A Trustee enquired what the pay outs had been for and what claims had been rejected.* GC stated 5 accidents, 2 bereavements and 1 illness and those rejected were predominantly for pre-existing conditions. A Trustee reminded the Board that they had chosen to go with a lower-level policy a couple of years back. GC confirmed that last year the policy pay outs covered the costs but that this was not the case this year. GC wanted to know if Trustees wished to keep a staff absence insurance given that it made a loss. *A Trustee suggested that there needed to be a document stating under what circumstances the Trust would pay an employee and then look at this vs the insurance cost.* KT and several Trustees felt that the Trust should keep this lower-level insurance to prevent vulnerability. **DECISION: Trustees agreed that GC should source quotes for similarly low-level staff absence insurance and then circulate by email for approval as the cost will be above KT's delegated approval level.**

5) Financial Policies

It was noted that the following policies have been reviewed by KT and GC and that they are not recommending any amendments to the existing policies for 2021/22:

- Financial Regulations
- Procurement Policy
- Delegated Authority List (Scheme of Delegations)
- Charging Policy
- Accounting Policy – Assets and Depreciation
- Competitive Tendering Policy

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lettings Policy ▪ Purchase Procedures ▪ Reserves Policy ▪ Gift and Honorariums Statement ▪ Donations Policy ▪ Travel and Subsistence Policy <p>The Board thanked GC for all her hard work and wished her a lovely summer. <i>GC left the meeting at 7.42pm</i></p> | |
| 7. | <p><u>TRUST STRATEGY 2021-24</u></p> <p>Chair explained that a stand-alone strategy meeting was scheduled for early next term to discuss this document in more detail. KT asked if Trustees would be happy for the strategy document to be published on the website now even if amends are made in September as she feels that it is an important document that is missing. DECISION: Trustees agreed to the publication of the proposed Trust Strategy document on the website subject to Chair’s comments being implemented and notes being removed.</p> | |
| 8. | <p><u>RISK LOG – format update</u></p> <p>Trustees were advised to look at the link from KT’s report that took them through to the ESFA’s new guidance on Academy Trust risk management. KT’s report summarised the approach suggested. ACTION: KT committed to completing a risk log in this format for next term. KT explained that risk mitigation should sit in a different document.</p> <p>KT’s report listed all risks she had identified by area.</p> | KT |
| 9. | <p><u>SAFEGUARDING AND SCR</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB confirmed that she had visited the school on 30th June between 8.30am and 9.30am. She checked the SCR and went over some updated safeguarding policies. JB had met with the Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead with whom she had discussed SCA’s safeguarding audit report and current safeguarding incidents. A Trustee asked if there were any actions coming out of the safeguarding audit. JB confirmed the only one was that not all Trustees had completed their safeguarding for governance training. | |

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| | <p>ACTION: All Trustee to complete NGA Safeguarding for Governance online training by September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB had completed a report but this had not been circulated. ACTION: KT to circulate JB's safeguarding visit report. • Trustees had been provided the DfE's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges for September 2021 for information as well as a link to the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education for September 2021. • KT explained that the Covid risk assessment would need updating for September. • KT thanked JB for coming into school to review Safeguarding and Chair thanked JB for stepping in this term to cover in the absence of a Safeguarding Lead Trustee. Chair is hopeful that the Academy Ambassadors advert will lead to the appointment of new Trustees who will be willing and able to take on the role. | <p>All Trustees that this applies to</p> <p>KT</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p><u>EXECUTIVE HEAD REPORT</u></p> <p>Due to the time KT only focused on a couple of points from her report. KT said that really good progress has been made at both schools with regards to planning for next year.</p> <p><i>See also confidential minutes part A</i></p> | |
| <p>11.</p> | <p><u>POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS FOR APPROVAL/REVIEW</u></p> <p>DECISION: The proposed budget, outturn and 3-year forecast were approved for submission to the ESFA (see item 6 for full details)</p> <p>DECISION: Trustees approved the minor amends made to the Recruitment and Selection policy</p> <p>Trustees had been sent a link to the letter from Eileen Milner, chief executive of the ESFA, to academy trusts accounting officers for July 2021.</p> <p>Ratification by the FBT of Policies, Documents and Decisions agreed by</p> | |

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| | <p>Committees that require approval by Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FPP Committee: none ➤ TLW Committee: Revised Teaching and Learning Policy | |
| 12. | <p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>A Trustee asked if Jan Martin supported RMA. A. No, Jan currently only supports SCA and KT, but this will need looking at in the future.</p> <p>The Board said farewell to KS, JB and clerk thanking them for their support and commitment to Spring Common Academy and later Horizons Education Trust. JB will be staying on as a Member and asked whether she is able to attend meetings in the future. Chair confirmed that JB could attend FBT meetings excluding confidential items and that she would be most welcome.</p> | |
| 13. | <p><u>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</u></p> <p>DECISION: The Confidential Minutes Part A and B from The Board of Trustees meeting 17th June 2021 were approved.</p> <p><i>See also confidential minutes Part A</i></p> <p>KT left the meeting</p> <p><i>See confidential minutes Part B</i></p> | |
| 14. | <p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy Meeting Wednesday 8th September 6pm at SCA TBC • FBT Meeting Tuesday 19th October 6pm via Teams | |

Meeting ended at 8:35pm

Documents provided in advance of the meeting to be read in conjunction with minutes:

- Horizons Education Trust Strategic Plan 2021-24 – updated June 2021
- Executive Head report
- Finance Report
- Forecast
- HEDT Recruitment and Selection Policy 2021
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools – published 2021

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- CCC03 – Progress report 10
- SCA Annual Safeguarding Report for Governors 2020/21

Minutes sent to Chair for approval to circulate: 28/07/21

Minutes approved for circulation by Chair: 30/07/21

Minutes circulated to Trustees and attendees: 9/08/21

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