

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 16th July 2020***

***1pm via online Video-link***

**MINUTES**

Trustees Present: Mr J. Beswick Prof. A. Boddison

Mr C. Bush Mr S. Chamberlain (CEO)

Mrs J. Cutchey Mr R. Dool (Chair)

Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson Ms M. Lloyd

Members Present: Ms L. Adams

Officers Present: Mr D. Hilton Mrs K. Jarvis

Mr C. Paskell Mrs J. Steel

**CONFIDENTIAL NOTES HAVE BEEN REDACTED FOR PUBLIC MINUTES**

**1.** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, NOTICE & QUORUM**

* 1. Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Mr Bateson, Mr Kerr and Mrs Capron.

Mr Dool made Trustees aware that Marilyn Toft, Director of CPD, had decided to retire from the Trust at the end of the academic year. Mr Dool spoke of Ms Toft’s involvement with the Trust since its inception, and her valuable contribution throughout her time as a Trustee and employee. He added that she had been instrumental in helping CPD grow and develop, and is the main lead for securing the high standards of safeguarding the Trust is known to have achieved. Mr Dool ended by stating that Ms Toft will missed but it is hoped that she will stay in touch.

Mr Chamberlain added that colleagues will celebrate Marilyn’s time at ALT when able, and informed Trustees that she has been invited to continue legacy work with Leading Active Learning. Mr Chamberlain added his own thanks to the Ms Toft for her work and commitment.

Mr Bush stated that he had had spoken to Ms Toft since she made her decision to step down, and she is looking forward to the next chapter of her life. He added that as a founder member alongside Ms Toft he has always been appreciative of her support.

All Trustees wished Ms Toft well, and looked forward to her revisiting in the future.

**Kingsfield Primary School**

At this point of the meeting, Mr Dool introduced Mrs Kate Coates, the newly appointed Headteacher for Kingsfield Primary School. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that Mrs Coates is currently employed at the Isle of Ely Primary School, but is being deployed to Kingsfield with great effect. Mrs Coates has been working closely with Ms Toni Jackson, the interim head, which has ensured that a smooth handover.

Mrs Coates spoke of the plans and changes already taking place. The layout of the school has been re-designed, with The Base provision being removed, and a new office and reception area being installed. A mobile classroom that was a library is now a dedicated Art and DT area, which will raise the profile of The Arts, with the library being moved into the heart of the school. The curriculum has been rewritten. In the Autumn term, Mrs Coates will introduce the school community to the school values of Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be your Best, with children rewarded for recognising and acting upon these core values.

Mrs Coates informed Trustees that the school budget is a cause of concern.

Mr Hilton was pleased to report to Trustees that, although Kingsfield remains high on the agenda of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), a recent meeting was very positive. The Trust was able to demonstrate the work already undertaken and present a clear view of how the school will continue to move forward. Mrs Coates was questioned rigorously, but responded well. Mr Chamberlain said that the RSC has requested an update meeting in the Autumn Term and would expect to see positive outcomes from the action plan in place, particularly in regard to school improvement. He added that the RSC had stated that she wants ALT “to be a strong advocate in the region” and a representative from the RSC’s office will attend a future Board meeting.

Prof Boddison asked about EHCP provision, and if any needs cannot be catered for within the school. Mrs Coates replied that she believes there has been a culture of under-diagnosis in the past, and she plans to introduce a reassessment programme to confirm needs. A Pupil Premium and SEN specialist intervention teacher has been appointed to support SCMH and behaviour concerns. Mr Simon Bainbridge, Exec Head of Highfield schools, has been asked to support Kingsfield staff in the assessment of pupils, with Assess, Plan, Do, Review being the mantra going forward.

Prof Boddison asked if there is likely to be an increased risk of exclusion. He added that reducing exclusions is high on the government agenda. Mrs Coates does not believe so, as she and the SLT are aware of the issues pupils returning will face and have plans in place to mitigate.

Mr Chamberlain hopes that the catch-up funding promised by the Government can be used around SCMH and tutoring for those with the greatest need. Once restrictions on how the funding can be used are officially confirmed, it is hoped to be able to support pupil mental health and behaviour. These support networks will assist in reducing exclusions.

Mr Dool thanked Mrs Coates for attending the meeting, adding that Trustees looked forward to receiving regular updates on the exciting plans in place.

Mrs Coates left the meeting at this point.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

* 1. No new interests were declared for items on the agenda.
  2. No updates were notified for the Register of Interests. Mrs Jarvis reminded Trustees to return the annual renewal forms that accompanied the agenda.

1. **CHAIR’S ACTION**
   1. Mr Dool reported that he had signed off one Urgent Action since the last meeting to approve essential works at Gusford Primary School to take place in the summer holidays. The works, quoted at £276k, are outside of the scheme of delegation limits and therefore require Board approval.

Mr Chamberlain raised three matters at this point:

1. Neale-Wade Academy. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that a new Principal had been appointed for Neale-Wade Academy. Mr Graham Horn was an internal candidate, with the current role of Vice-Principal. Trustees were pleased to be able to ratify the appointment.
2. Chairs of Governors. Mr Chamberlain asked that Trustees ratify the appointment of two new Chairs of Governors for Local Governing Bodies:

Mrs Jenny Milsom and Mr Jason Wing were approved as Chairs for Gusford Primary School and Littleport & East Cambs Academy respectively.

1. Gary Peile Awards. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that despite the COVID19 pandemic, the presentation of the Gary Peile Awards for Resilience had gone ahead at each school by video link with a personal message from the CEO. He added that he sees this as the first of a group of awards across all areas that will recognise the talent and achievements of young people across the Trust.
2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON THURSDAY 14th MAY 2020**
   1. The Minutes of the previous meeting, 14th May 2020, were confirmed as a true record. Mrs Jarvis apologised for the Minutes referring to Dr Boddison, instead of Professor Boddison.
   2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2020

4.2 Mrs Jarvis was asked to distribute the Talent & Capacity Register alongside the Minutes

4.2 Mr Chamberlain confirmed that a model option that has been agreed with members of the Finance Committee is in place for the central funding income. Mr Bush asked for clarification on the model and Mr Chamberlain explained that this would not be based on GAG pooling, but on the Director of Finance & Operations managing school reserves

1. **MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING ON THURSDAY 28th MAY 2020**
   1. The Minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 28th May 2020, were confirmed as a true record.
   2. It was recognised by Trustees that the matters discussed had evolved since the meeting, but were in place. Ms Lloyd asked that the thanks of Trustees be recorded for all the central team, and Trust staff. Mr Chamberlain was asked to relay the thanks of Trustees to all staff within his end of term letter for the way in which they have responded professionally to the Coronavirus outbreak.
2. **CEO’s REPORT**

***(numbering in this section relates to the numbering in the CEO report)***

Trustees confirmed that they had received the CEO report that was distributed prior to the meeting.

2. Mr Chamberlain began his report by echoing Ms Lloyds comments about the central team, who have been phenomenal since the pandemic began. He was able to report that the Trust has responded to all DfE recommendations for reopening, including some schools opening early to aid transition work, all secondary schools meeting or exceeding the 25% target, and all primary schools offering at least the recommended provision to parents of designated year groups.

2.1. Trustees were asked to refer to the data reports that had been distributed prior to the meeting, which showed the low number of confirmed cases of COVID19 within our schools. Mr Dool queried whether there is separate data for North Suffolk, and Mr Chamberlain agreed to check.

2.3.Mr Bush asked why the attendance at Neale-Wade Academy was lower than at the other secondary schools. Mr Chamberlain explained that Neale-Wade had introduced a robust on-line programme that students were accessing instead. There is also the problem of students not being able to access school transport at present from the outlying villages of Neale-Wade, which is not an issue for the other secondary schools.

Mr Hely-Hutchinson asked if the attendance figures were in line with national trends. Mr Chamberlain confirmed that they were, or being exceeded, with the national figures being around 50%.

2.4.Mr Chamberlain spoken about the process for signing off risk assessments, which are subject to change daily. He informed Trustees that following an announcement from the Government (expected 11th August) the Board will be required to sign off on reopening schools for September. It was recognised that there could be significant changes, but all Trustees were comfortable with the arrangements already in place:

* Mr Chamberlain and the Central Team will provide a reopening plan, including risk assessments
* These will be emailed to Trustees as soon as they are available
* Trustees can forward any questions, concerns or queries to Mr Dool
* Mr Dool and Ms Lloyd will sign off the plans on behalf of the Board, taking into account any Trustee comments, under Urgent Action procedures.

3. Mr Hilton updated Trustees on the virtual school provision and how this is evolving from recovery into renewal. There are two strands – student engagement and staff CPD – that are being worked on over the summer under the ALT Institute umbrella, and will include courses to support the curriculum, videos, presentations and e-learning modules. In addition to the ALT Institute, GUIDE has been procured to support on-line learning across the Trust. Mr Chamberlain added that these will add capacity to the contingency plans for any COVID19 related breakouts, or similar scenarios, in the future, and improve sharing of resources across all Trust schools. The programme will eventually be widened to include GCSE courses.

**5. School Updates**

Mr Chamberlain referred to the summaries for each school, making particular notes of schools causing concern.

6.3.Mr Chamberlain confirmed that the Government provided laptops have been distributed to schools and students, but were late arriving. Confirmation of details for the National Tutoring Programme is still awaited.

7.1. The Early Career Framework will be positive for the Trust. ALT will be networking with CPET.

7.2. Feedback from staff taking part in the Management and Masters Apprenticeship scheme has been good. This is in collaboration with the National College of Education. Mr Paskell added that they is no indication that the Apprenticeship Programme will be cancelled or replaced.

9. BRAG Rating. Mr Chamberlain introduced the updated system that will be used to rate schools over a wider range of areas. Raw data will be used – the SIT will add with school involvement – ALT’s SLT will review, input and revise – results will be presented to the Board. The system is a multi-dimensional report that has the capability to add exceptions comments and can be constantly developed to show a true picture.

***Trustees noted the content of Mr Chamberlain’s comprehensive report and the actions being undertaken across the Trust.***

**7. CENTRAL RESTRUCTURE**

Mr Chamberlain updated the Board on the plans for the restructure of the central team, highlighting the following:

* The two roles of Assistant Directors of Education will ensure Mr Hilton is fully supported
* The Talent & Capacity Register will provide a pool of colleagues that can be called upon
* The School Improvement Team require the right personnel to be in post to ensure standards can be driven up
* The work already started on CPD needs to develop
* The structure allows central funding to be released which will give capacity to grow leaders
* The model shows clear succession planning

A consultation document will be forwarded to central staff, with the aim of the restructure being in place by early October.

Mr Hely Hutchinson asked if staff in school (ie those on the Talent & Capacity Register) are financially rewarded, and if so how this is funded. Mr Chamberlain explained that a system of ‘buying days’ will be introduced so that schools can offset staff support received by offering their own staff in an alternative area. Tight controls will be in place.

Mr Chamberlain confirmed that the KPIs have been strengthened as requested at the

last meeting.

***Trustees approved the detail of the central team restructure. Mr Chamberlain was given permission to progress with the restructure as presented.***

**8. BOARD COMMITTEES**

8.1. The Minutes of the Committee Meetings held on 14th May 2020 were confirmed as a true record, with no technical corrections being required.

8.2. Mr Dool reminded Trustees of the plan to add additional committees to the structure for Quality of Education and Safeguarding. He reported on conversations he has had with Trustees following on from the last meeting, the outcomes of which are given below:

* The financial knowledge and experience of Mr Hely Hutchinson (current Safeguarding link) would be best served by supporting the Finance and Audit Committees.
* Mrs Cutchey has volunteered to Chair the Safeguarding Committee and act as the Safeguarding link
* Prof Boddison has volunteered to Chair the Quality of Education Committee.
* The Finance and Audit Committees will remain split, with Mr Beswick remaining as Chair of Audit and Mr Hely Hutchinson Chairing Finance (to meet the AFH regulation regarding chairing of committees).
* The Personnel Committee will also remain separate (and not join Finance to become Resources as originally proposed) under the Chairship of Ms Lloyd.

Mr Beswick explained that member of the Audit and Finance Committees were not convinced that merging with Personnel would gain a more strategic perspective. Mrs Steel reiterated that the Personnel Committee has a less predictable timescale than other committees, and must be allowed to remain flexible so that a meeting could be called when required. She added that the Personnel Committee is not primarily about money – but about salaries, HR and people. Mr Beswick agreed, and asserted that view that whilst the Personnel Committee considers salaries, it is the role of the Finance Committee to consider the way in which funding is spent – not finite details such as individual salaries. Mr Dool advocated that the Personnel Committee should meet on a more regular basis. Prof Boddison suggested that more holistic decisions should come to the full Board meetings. Mr Chamberlain agreed, adding that the Board needs to be sure it is fulfilling its statutory duty regarding public money spending. Prof Boddison and Mr Bush both stated that it is not the job of the Board to look at operational decisions – this was agreed by other Trustees.

It was agreed that a meeting timetable would be built, and Chairs of Committees would have some discretion to move the dates to fit circumstances.

***Trustees noted the content of the minutes from the committee meetings held on 14th May 2020, and recognised that meetings for the Finance Committee and Audit Committee had taken place remotely.***

**9. AREAS OF RISK**

9.1. RAG rating of schools covered in Item 6 – CEO Report.

9.2. Mrs Jarvis reported that there were no significant changes to the Risk Register which had been circulated prior to the meeting. A risk relating to Health & Safety visits has been added (due to visits not taking place during lockdown), and the risks on SMSC and GDPR have been reduced due to procedures to mitigate both areas being firmly embedded in schools.

Prof Boddison suggested that a risk be added relating to the reputation of the Trust should it become public that a member of staff has flouted rules during lockdown. Mrs Steel was asked to consider this and add a risk to the register.

**10. STAFFING UPDATE**

Mrs Steel gave a verbal report on staffing. Items included:

***Schools Updates:***

* + New headteachers joined the Isle of Ely and Chesterton Primary Schools at Easter
  + Kingsfield and Hillside Primary Schools will have new headteachers from September
  + Neale-Wade Academy will have a new Principal from September
  + Scott Gaskins will move from Head of School to Principal of LECA from September
  + Teaching posts across the Trust are mostly fully staffed for September
  + There will be 40 NQTs across the Trust schools in September
  + There are currently 17 support staff vacancies across the Trust
  + The services of My New Term have been secured to assist and streamline recruitment, including giving recruitment analytics
  + COVID19 has had a damping effect on staff movement in the Summer term with staff tending to remain in post
  + Resignation figures to Easter show that 31 teachers and 62 support staff have moved jobs, with only 18 teachers and 34 support staff leaving the Trust
  + The teachers’ pay deal is likely to be delayed until October, when there will be a revised pay policy to be presented to the Board
  + All schools are carrying out performance management during COVID 19 as normal
  + At this point in time, all staff are expected to return to work in September.

**11. POLICIES**

11.1. Trustees confirmed that they had received the revised Safeguarding Policy and were happy to approve it. The policy was therefore ratified.

**12. SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH & SAFETY**

12.1. There were no further updates for Safeguarding.

12.2. Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees that Handsam have been booked to carry out additional, rigorous audits on site at schools early in the Autumn Term, with a particular focus on the Government guidance and expectation relating to COVID19. Additional risk assessments are expected to be required for reopening, but these will be dependent on government advice expected to be announced on 11th August.

**13. TIMES & DATES of FUTURE MEETINGS**

The date of the next meeting will be forwarded to Trustees alongside the revised Committee dates, as per discussion in item 8.

A discussion took place on the merits and downfalls of virtual meetings. Whilst some Trustees preferred not to travel, others were concerned that personalities could become lost. It was agreed that a mixture of both should be scheduled, but only once government guidance concerned it safe to travel.



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 16th July 2020***

**ACTION POINTS**

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| **Agenda Item** | **Who?** | **Action** | **Timeline** |
| 2 | ALL | Complete and return Declaration of Interest Forms | By 31st August 2020 |
| 4 | KJ | Distribute Talent & Capacity Register | With minutes |
| 5 | SC | Write to staff and express thanks of Trustees for work this year, particularly in relation to COVID | End of term |
| 6 | SC | Check data presented in CEO report relating to North Suffolk | Not required |
| 6 | SC | Present BRAG rating wheels for all schools | Next meeting |
| 7 | SC | Central Team restructure | Update at next meeting |
| 8 | KJ | Board committee structure and dates | With minutes |
| 9 | JS | Add to Risk Register – reputational risk to Trust | 1st September |