

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 22nd October 2020***

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

**MINUTES**

Trustees Present: Mr D. Bateson OBE Prof. A. Boddison

Mr C. Bush Mr S. Chamberlain (CEO)

Mrs J. Cutchey Mr R. Dool (Chair)

Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson Mr M. Kerr

Ms M. Lloyd

Members Present: Ms L. Adams

Officers Present: Mr D. Hilton Mrs K. Jarvis

Mr C. Paskell Mrs J. Steel

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| THE KEY DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARISED BELOW | |
| DECISION | Mr Dool re-elected Chair |
| DECISION | Ms Lloyd re-elected Vice-Chair |
| DECISION | Agreed that Pakefield Primary School consult on an amendment to PAN |
| DECISION | Agreed that the Central Team continue to administer Admission Appeals |
| DECISION | Agreed that Admissions Arrangements for Chantry Academy continue in line with other Trust schools |
| RECOMMENDATION | Trustees recommend to Members that Mrs Weaver be appointed as a Trustee |

**MINUTES**

**Confidential Items 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 Beswick and Mrs Capron. It was noted that Ms Adams has previously informed the Board that she would join the meeting at 1.30pm. All apologies were accepted.

**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. Mr Dool reminded Trustees that those who have not returned their annual declaration forms to Mrs Jarvis should do so as soon as possible.

1. **CHAIR’S ACTION**
   1. Mr Dool stated that no Chair’s Actions had been undertaken since the last meeting.
2. **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**
   1. Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees of the self-nominations for Chair for the coming year. Mr Dool was duly elected. Mr Dool thanked the Board members for their support, and spoke of the excellent progress that had been achieved during a year of significant change in difficult circumstances. He stated his belief that the solid foundation and values that were set up by the Trust’s founders have allowed the Trustees to further develop the vision, ethos, and strategic plan. Alongside this, robust and enhanced governance and leadership arrangements have been put in place to help ensure we raise standards and drive improvement. He added that the content of the documentation received for the meeting showed that the Trust is in a ‘good place’ to grow and develop, and spoke of his personal passion to ensure the Trust moves in the right direction.
   2. Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees of the nominations for Vice-Chair for the coming year. Ms Lloyd was duly elected.
   3. Mr Dool and Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that, following a meeting with Mrs Rosie Weaver, they would like to recommend that Mrs Weaver become a Trustee of the Active Learning Trust. Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the personal biography circulated prior to the meeting and were happy to approve the recommendation. This was proposed by Mr Bush and seconded by Ms Lloyd. Mrs Jarvis explained that the recommendation would be forwarded to Board Members to ratify under special resolution.
   4. Mr Chamberlain referred to a document that had been circulated with the agenda entitled *Race In/Equality and school leadership: what can school leaders and governors do?* He explained that the DfE are asking governors to question whether their Board and Local Governing Bodies reflect the diversity of their school communities, adding that there is a need to reflect on whether ALT should be looking to increase diversity in governance. Trustees debated the issue, recognising that the East of England has a high proportion of people that identify as White/British and acknowledging previous attempts to increase diversity in school leaders. All agreed that it is right to have a policy to increase diversity, but expressed concern that this could become tokenism, which would be unacceptable. In response to a question from Mr Kerr, Mr Chamberlain reported that other Trusts approach this by actively seeking diversity when vacancies occur naturally. Mr Hely Hutchinson suggested that individuals with an interest and particular skill set should actively be sought, which would bring genuine value and different perspectives to the table. It was agreed that we should make efforts to actively improve the diversity of membership and this was an issue that should be considered by both the Board and LGB’s. Ideally, a person/ persons with experiences and a skill base should be sought, who would also enhance that which currently exists would bring real benefits. Trustees agreed to let Mrs Jarvis know of any candidates for consideration before or by the next meeting. Mr Dool asked that Mr Chamberlain relay the same procedure to Chairs of Governors at his meetings with them after half term.

Ms Adams joined the meeting at this point.

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH JULY 2020**
   1. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.
   2. There were no matters arising that were not listed on the Agenda.
2. **BOARD COMMITTEES**

Trustees were asked to note the revised format of the committee meetings, which give a clear overview sheet listing recommendations, decisions and action points.

* 1. The notes of the meeting of the Remuneration & Personnel Committee held on 24th September were noted.
  2. The notes of the meeting of the Quality of Education Committee held on 24th September were noted.
  3. Mr Hely Hutchinson informed Trustees that a meeting of the Finance Committee had taken place prior to the Board meeting. Items discussed included the ICT Strategy, Budgets and Procurement.
  4. Mr Kerr informed Trustees that a meeting of the Audit Committee had taken place prior to the Board meeting. Particular note was made of the high quality of the Audit Reports from the Trust’s Compliance Officer.

1. **CEO’s REPORT**

Trustees confirmed that they had received the CEO report that was distributed prior to the meeting. Mr Chamberlain took Trustees through his comprehensive report, including an update on COVID-19 developments and mitigations, an update on the Trust Development Plan, schools causing concern and the Trust Risk Register.

Mr Dool asked that Mr Chamberlain start his report by updating Trustees on the health and well-being of the central team and our leaders in schools. Mr Chamberlain replied that all are well, and either working from home or in schools. He added that he has met with headteachers (either in person or virtually) and some initial nervousness about schools re-opening had dissipated, with the vast majority of children returning ready to learn. He added that under and over reactions have been alleviated and Mr Chamberlain asked that his thanks be noted to the Trust Executive Team for their work to ensure that schools re--opened safely and in line with Government guidance.

**COVID UPDATE**

Mr Chamberlain referred to the summary of positive recorded COVID cases on page 5 of his report and asked Trustees to note that since his report was written LECA have had to self-isolate 120 pupils and 8 staff due to a positive test result of a pupil, and Chantry have had to self-isolate 29 pupils due to a positive test result of a pupil.

Referring to his report, Mr Chamberlain highlighted the following:

* Attendance is in line with national figures.
* Students in Year 9 plus, are now expected to wear face coverings when in public areas in schools. This has been the expectation in ALT schools for some time.
* 22nd October is the date by which all schools are required by the DfE to have delivery of on-line learning and procedures for monitoring online work in place. ALT schools all have procedures in place, although there is some concern about the IT infrastructure of North Suffolk. Work within the Trust ICT team has been accelerated.
* Catch up funding is being held centrally until all schools have submitted explanations of their spending plans. Mr Hilton is reviewing the plans to ensure they include three clear impact strands before funds are released.

Prof Boddison joined the meeting at this point.

* Providers for the National Tutoring Programme are expected to be announced on 2nd November 2020. The Trust is hoping to be able to work with Unity.
* There is still some confusion around how 2021 exams will be taken and how qualifications will be awarded. The DfE have promised a comprehensive list of mitigations will be available soon.

**TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN**

**ACTIVE LEARNERS – ACTIVE LEADERS – ACTIVE CITIZENS – ACTIVE LIVES**

Mr Chamberlain updated Trustees on the latest version of the Trust Strategic Plan. He explained that links to the MAT Excellence Framework could be used by Trustees to review the plan. The Trust budget is being revised so that areas of income and spend are clearly linked to, and show support for, the plan. Trustees were asked to inform Mr Chamberlain of any areas/columns they would like adding. Mr Bush commented that he was impressed with the granularity of the plan, which give raw materials to monitor teaching and learning. He asked what the CPD and School Improvement (SI) model look like in practice. Mr Hilton responded by explaining the stronger network links between CPD and SI, being led by senior leaders (eg deputies) across the Trust. Mr Chamberlain added that Oracy work is continuing and executive heads have risen to the challenge of whole Trust roles, which in turn supports their NPQH work. Associate leaders are starting to have impact, and by offering clear CPD and progression pathways, The Trust has been able to retain staff who are looking for the next challenge in their career. Central costs are expected to be reduced, as staff will roll on and roll off as required, giving the flexibility to target SI where and when needed. Mr Chamberlain concluded this section reiterating that the ALT Institute is real strength of the Trust and the Talent and Capacity Register (for which Mr Hilton and Mr Chamberlain will act as gatekeepers) will add value to CPD across the whole Trust.

**ALT INSTITUTE: VIRTUAL LEARNING & CPD**

Mr Hilton updated Trustees on the on-line learning CPD – Guide – which includes a library of content for staff to access. Headteachers can schedule training, and check that it had been completed. Guide can also be used to share on-line teaching sessions. It will be launched after half-term. Mr Chamberlain gave examples of the CPD pathways available. Anspear virtual training is available through the system, which is personalised for ALT. Mr Chamberlain also informed Trustees that he is helping to pilot an anti-racism collective that is growing in momentum and now has the support of the Local Authorities. This will be built into the ALT Institute.

Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that virtual Governor training sessions have been organised for after half-term, which will support the on-line training that targets governance within Guide. He added that Mr Hilton is looking at how the successful programmes of Leading Active Learning and Leading Active Learning Advanced can be continued alongside other CPD within the Institute.

**OFSTED**

Mr Chamberlain reminded Trustees that 50% of our schools are due either a section 5 or a section 8 Ofsted visit within the academic year, including four schools causing concern. There is currently no information from Ofsted on when inspections will recommence, but there is no validated data for 2020 to consider. Schools and headteachers are being advised by the Trust that work should continue with school improvement as normal.

Mr Hilton reported on the recent Ofsted visit to Kingfield Primary School. This was a rigorous

process, with a 40mins meeting with Trust representatives which was very positive. The HMIs recognised the significant progress, and made particular reference that they were pleased to note that COVID was not being used as an excuse.

Mr Chamberlain reported on the recent Section 8 Ofsted visit to Gusford Primary School. Inspectors did not want to speak to representatives from the Trust. The visit was positive, with feedback praising SEN and the curriculum.

Pakefield Primary School and Burrowmoor Primary School are expected to be the next schools to be visited.

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DOCUMENT**

Mr Chamberlain referred to the SI document that had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that this is a work in progress. The document recognises improvement, but does not yet capture how improvement has been achieved. The revised format allows evidence to be added, including for headteachers to include case studies.

Mr Bateson complimented Mr Chamberlain on the SI document, adding that it was pleasing to see the plan come together recognising that it is system, rather than person, led. Mr Bush echoed Mr Bateson’s comments. He made particular reference to the SI Dashboard and the inclusion of the final column that linked to impact, which gives a clear indication of the work being carried out. The full document and dashboard will be provided to the Quality of Education Committee for regular review, and it was agreed that the full Board should receive a summary from the Committee as feedback. It was also agreed that an exceptions report (exemplars and concerns) would be included. KPIs will give a useful overview for the Board, but will remain for full discuss at Committee level.

Mr Chamberlain explained that Mr Hilton and his team would be using the dashboard to look at teaching standards, and considering how these look across the Trust. This information will be used to drive future CPD, including being built into headteacher CPD through an on-line module being developed with Anspear for senior leaders.

Mr Bateson asked if future reports (long term) could include data on SEND and ethnicity. He would also like to receive information on where pupils go and what they do after they leave our schools. Mr Chamberlain agreed that this could be included in reports to the Quality of Education Committee.

**SAFEGUARDING**

Mr Chamberlain explained that the newly formed Safeguarding committee would review and monitor safeguarding on behalf of the Board. Trust-wide reports have been requested from MyConcern to allow monitoring at central Trust level, and the Trust Compliance Officer checks the SCR for all schools as part of the Audit cycle. A safeguarding expert has been contracted to work with the Trust for two days per week and will audit safeguarding in schools alongside advising schools. This will not only ensure compliance, but create a culture of good practise.

**EARLY CAREERS FRAMEWORK**

University links have been established to involve Cromwell Community College in the ITT programme. An expert in this area has been employed to assist Cromwell, and will also support secondary school literacy and reading.

**GOVERNANCE**

Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that an IEB has been established at Kingsfield following concerns about the capability of the local governing body.

**OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE**

* Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that the website is currently being re-vamped. This will include access to the on-line learning platform, GUIDE.
* Expansion plans at Chantry Academy are moving forward, and Mr Chamberlain will update Trustees as more news becomes available.
* The Trust’s Mental Health Strategy continues to develop with MH Champions readily available to support staff if required.
* Mrs Driver will be working with schools to bid for funding grants.

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

1. **AREAS OF CONCERN & RISK**

8.1. It was noted that schools causing concern were covered in the CEO report.

Mr Bush queried the dashboard ratings for Gusford Primary School.

8.2. Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the Trust Risk Register and had no questions regarding the updates made.

1. **POLICIES**

9.1. Admission Arrangements

Mrs Jarvis took Trustees through the report relating to the annual review of Trust Admission Arrangements. There were three areas to be considered:

a) A change in Government policy has meant that Local Authorities are no longer allowed to charge MATs to administer Admission Appeals if they do not charge LA maintained schools. This has resulted in Cambridgeshire offering their appeal service to MATs for free, whilst Suffolk are going to charge all schools. The Board considered that all Active Learning Trust Schools should be offered the same service (thus retaining equability) and so the central team will continue to administer appeals for all schools.

b) Pakefield Primary School would like to reduce their PAN from 60 pupils to 45 pupils. This is due to a steady decrease in numbers in recent years, resulting in two classes per year group becoming financially unviable. This would come into effect for pupil admission 2022. Trustees considered the evidence presented and agreed that a reduction in PAN should be taken forward. A public consultation period will be required.

c)The Executive Headteacher of Chantry Academy had prepared a paper to support the admission criteria for Chantry being amended to give priority to Gusford Primary School pupils, followed by pupils from the local ‘pyramid’ of schools. Trustees considered the implications of approving the proposal against the impact on the local community of not approving it. Factors considered included the balance of the school community, advantages for Gusford pupils, the likelihood of neighbouring children not getting a place and public perception. Following a lengthy discussion, Trustees agreed that this was a wider issue, and to allow the changes would be a fundamental shift in policy for the Trust. It was agreed that the Trust principle of local schools supporting the local community should be maintained. The proposal was therefore rejected. It was further agreed by Trustees that all efforts should be made to increase capacity for Chantry Academy so that part of the issue could be alleviated.

***Trustees agreed that:***

1. ***The central team should continue to administer the admission appeals process for all Trust schools.***
2. ***A consultation period be started with the aim of the Published Admission Number for Pakefield Primary School being reduced to 45 for 2022.***
3. ***The proposal to revise the admission criteria for Chantry Academy is rejected, and the Admission Arrangements will remain as current.***
4. **EXECUTIVE PAY: DfE RESPONSE**

Mrs Steel explained that the Board is required to respond to a letter from the DfE on excessive executive pay. Mrs Steel had prepared a lengthy response, which Trustees confirmed they had had the opportunity to consider prior to the meeting. She explained the rationale behind the responses and summarised the detail. She pointed out that no definition of executive pay is available, and there is no information informing recipients of which trusts have been send a similar letter.

Mr Bateson stated that it was an excellent review that clearly showed that ALT should not be considered as paying an excessive amount to leading executives. Mr Dool agreed, adding that many headteachers earn more, and Trustees are aware that ALT has always paid under the average. It was noted that some media reports on this area include on-costs and benefits, which gives an unfair reflection and leads to misinterpretation.

Mrs Steel was thanked for her report and Trustees agreed that it should be send as presented.

1. **SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH & SAFETY**

11.1. Trustees noted that Safeguarding across the Trust would be monitored by the Safeguarding Committee in future. Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees that the Trust Policy Statement relating to Safeguarding has been updated and will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee at their next meeting.

11.2. Mrs Jarvis referred to a report on Health and Safety across the Trust. The report was in three parts:

1. Trustees were asked to note that the Health & Safety Statement of Intent that precedes and supports all school Health & Safety Polices has been reviewed for the academic year 2020/21. The Policy Statement was approved.
2. Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed and noted the summaries of the Health & Safety Audits that have taken place since the beginning of term. The audits concentrated on documentation compliance, COVID readiness, and audit progress.
3. Trustees were asked to note the on-going programme of Health & Safety training, including Handsam training for new staff that is taking place across the Trust.

***Trustees noted the content of the Health & Safety Report and the on-going work in this area across the Trust.***

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 17th December 2020.



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 22nd October 2020***

**ACTION POINTS**

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| **Agenda Item** | **Who?** | **Action** | **Timeline** |
| 4.3 | KJ | Distribute Special Resolution forms to Members that recommend Mrs Weaver be appointed as a Trustee | ASAP |
| 4.4 | ALL | Forward nominations of people with a specific skill base relating to gaps in diversity to Mrs Jarvis | ASAP |
| 7 | ALL | Inform Mr Chamberlain of areas to be added to the Strategic Plan | On-going |
| 10 | JS | Respond to DfE letter on executive pay on behalf of the Board | 31st October 2020 |
| 11.1 | Safeguarding Committee | Consider Safeguarding Policy Statement | Safeguarding Meeting |