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**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 25th March 2021***

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

**MINUTES**

Trustees & Members Ms L. Adams Mr D. Bateson MBE

Present: Prof. A. Boddison Mr S. Chamberlain (CEO)

Mr C. Bush Mr R. Dool (Chair)

Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson Mr M. Kerr

Ms M. Lloyd Mrs C. Quinn

Ms R. Weaver BEM

Officers Present: Mr D. Hilton Mrs K. Jarvis

Mr C. Paskell

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| THE KEY DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARISED BELOW | |
| DECISION | NONE |
| RECOMMENDATION | NONE |

**MINUTES**

**Confidential Items are highlighted in Red**

**4. PRESENTATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE HEADS**

4.1. Mr Dool explained that the agenda would be taken out of order to allow for presentations from three executive headteachers of the Trust. The heads spoke informatively on their work, their schools and the projects they lead upon across the Trust. Further details are given at Appendix A.

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

1.1. Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Mr Beswick, Mrs Capron and Mrs Cutchey.

1.2. All apologies were accepted.

**2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

2.1. Mr Dool extended a very warm welcome to Mr Mark Kerr, who has re-joined as a Member of The Active Learning Trust. Mr Dool expressed his pleasure that Mr Kerr’s experience will add a depth of balance and independence to the Membership that will be invaluable

2.2. Mr Dool asked those present to consider the content of their individual biographies and photos that had been distributed with the meeting papers, and ask that any updates be forwarded to Mrs Jarvis by the end of the Easter break so the Trust website could be updated.

2.3. Mr Dool informed Trustees that Mrs Jan Steel, the Trust’s Director of HR, had decided to retire. Mr Dool spoke for everyone when he recognised how much Mrs Steel will be missed.

Mr Dool spoke of Mrs Steel’s dedication to ALT and how she was instrumental in seeing it grow since inception. She has led the Board and three CEO’s through much transition to the organisation that ALT is today. He added that Mrs Steel is an outstanding practitioner not only in term of knowledge, skills and experience, but has a compassionate and understanding manner that has enables her to resolve issues in a caring and professional way.

Mr Dool concluded that he wanted the minutes to reflect the sincere gratitude of the Board for the highly professional and human manner in which she had led and delivered a first class HR service across the Trust. On behalf of the Board, he wished Ms Steel a long and happy retirement.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1. No new interests were declared for items on the agenda.

3.2. No updates were notified for the Register of Interests. Mrs Jarvis confirmed that all declarations had been received.

**5. CHAIR’S ACTION**

6.1. Mr Dool confirmed that he had not undertaken any Chair’s Actions since the last meeting.

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11th February 2021**

6.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2021 were accepted as a true record.

7.2. Matters Arising. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that the Teaching School business plan should be available for the next meeting. He explained that the delay was due to partnership and sponsor organisations being unconfirmed.

**7. MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING on 3rd MARCH 2021**

7.1. & 7.2. The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2021 were accepted as a true record, with no matters arising.

**8. BOARD COMMITTEES**

8.1. Trustees noted the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11th February 2021. It was also noted that the Finance Committee had met prior to this meeting and had discussed the evolving reporting formats and the finance dashboard.

8.2. Trustees noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 11th February 2021. It was also noted that the Audit Committee had met prior to this meeting.

8.3. Trustees noted the minutes of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 11th March 2021, and were pleased to note that the Trust is moving forward with an over-arching Safeguarding strategy.

8.4. Trustees noted the minutes of the Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 11th March 2021.

Mr Dool expressed satisfaction that the important work of all Committees is going well.

**9. CEO’s REPORT**

9.1. Trustees confirmed that they had received the CEO’s report prior to the meeting and had reviewed its contents. Mr Chamberlain highlighted the following:

* All schools have re-opened fully during the week commencing 8th March 2021 in line with government guidance. Pupil attendance is good.
* Secondary school testing has revealed a few COVID positive cases. In every case pupils were asymptomatic. Some bubble isolation has been necessary.
* Some schools are struggling to cover staff who are shielding – both personnel and financially.
* Four schools have been ‘visited’ by Ofsted during lockdown to assess their remote learning provision. All four received positive reports.
* Ofsted will be reviewing how inspections should be reintroduced in the summer term, with an emphasis on how to judge COVID disruption and a focus on moving forward.
* Guide has been launched with a positive response.
* Teaching school partnerships are still to be confirmed, which is hampering registration. Dependent on which organisations are successful in Hubs, it may mean that ALT will have to work with different providers.
* Staff, trustees and governors have been invited to the first Equality and Diversity session entitled ‘Let’s Talk About Race’. Work continues in this area and has been added to the Strategic Plan as a Trust priority.
* An online weekly newsletter is being published to keep the Trust community updated.

Mr Bush asked what happens if a pupil or member of staff refuses to be tested or wear a face covering. Mr Chamberlain explained that schools are “strongly encouraging” students and staff, but are not allowed to penalise those who choose to opt out. Secondary schools have produced videos to reassure anxious parents.

Mrs Quinn asked how prepared schools are should bubble or wider closer be necessary. Mr Chamberlain reassured Trustees that schools are able to cope should this happen as remote learning processes are now well established and it would be relatively easy to switch between the two teaching set ups.

Mr Bush asked about the discussion at Carr Street regarding one or two form entry, and whether a reduction would be financially viable. Mr Paskell replied that the DfE and the LA haven’t agreed on the final funding revenue stream. He added that a reduction to one form entry would be a risk, but he is optimistic of a positive outcome. Mr Dool stated that with a positive communication and marketing strategy, many local parents are likely to opt for Carr Street as the school of choice.

Mr Bush asked about the Data Dashboard information distributed, in relation to Neale-Wade Academy and Littleport & East Cambs Academy. Mr Chamberlain referred Trustees to the spreadsheet summaries on Governor Hub, which give more detail than the printed copies.

Mr Dool noted that the RAG ratings on the Data Dashboard for local governors are improving, however he asked that there is continued high scrutiny on this area to ensure that improvement continues.

**10. TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN**

Mr Chamberlain explained the updates to the Trust Strategic Plan, that now include richer dialogue for Trustees and executive leader links. It was agreed that Trustees would register an interest in a particular area of the Plan prior to the next meeting, and following this, we will review these requests alongside the latest trustee skills audits and aim to provide a “best fit” to further support the achievement of the aims and objectives within the plan.

**11. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

11.1. **Policies.** No policies were presented for ratification.

11.2. **Safeguarding**. Covered in item 8.3. - minutes of the Safeguarding Committee.

11.3. **Health & Safety.** Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the report circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that Burrowmoor Primary School had been asked to explain why completion of Handsam scores were low. Mrs Jarvis reported that the school had not reallocated tasks when staff had left or moved roles. This, coupled with a maternity leave, has led to an absence of recording. Trustees asked that this be followed up as a matter of urgency.

**12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

12.1. Mrs Jarvis asked Trustees to note the content of a summary from Mrs Driver entitled Information Governance Report. The report gave key performance indicators on subject access requests, data protection training, personal data breaches, and ICO complaints.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12.1. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 27th May 2021.

Mr Dool thanked all for attending and wished all present a very Happy Easter.

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**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**ACTION POINTS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda Item** | **Who?** | **Action** | **Timeline** |
| 6.7.2 | SC | Write business plan for ITT partnership with Hull University with costings and targets | By next meeting |
| 10 | ALL | Register areas of interest on the Strategic Plan with Mr Dool or Mrs Jarvis | By next meeting |
| 11.3 | KJ | Follow up with BPS on incomplete recording of H&S tasks | ASAP |

**APPENDIX A**

to minutes of Board meeting 25.03.21

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**4. PRESENTATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE HEADS**

4.1. Mr Dool explained that the agenda would be taken out of order to allow for presentations from three executive headteachers of the Trust. The heads spoke informatively on their work, their schools and the projects they lead upon across the Trust.

Each Executive-Head presented a power-point that outlined their work in their home schools and gave an overview of the work they carry out across the Trust. Copies of the power-point presentations are attached to these minutes. Discussion and questions followed each presentation:

**Chantry Academy : Mr CRAIG D’CUNHA**

Mr Dool recognised the work that Mr D’Cunha has done since he joined Chantry Academy when it was in special measures. He asked how the school will continue to develop and progress as Mr D’Cunha spends time of Trust projects. Mr D’Cunha replied that he felt the groundwork had been set for colleagues at Chantry to move the school to the next level. He sees this as an opportunity for career development for others as well as himself, and felt that one of the biggest challenges for someone becoming an executive head is ‘letting go’.

Mr Bush asked about past national surveys on NLE’s, and how schools struggle once the NLE leaves. Mr D’Cunha agreed that sustainability is important. He added that past NLE’s were parachuted into schools with the aim of gaining quick and immediate results, however he believes that the role of an executive head is to be an architect and builder of a school, embedding values and systems and a shared culture, with raised expectations, so that the school can continue to develop when an influential leader moves on.

**Red Oak Primary School : Mrs HEATHER MADSEN**

Prof Boddison commended Mrs Madsen for Red Oak’s success with SEND. He asked how SEND is deployed to cope with the high levels of need. Mrs Madsen explained that the schools deputy head is also the SENCo, but there is not just one person leading in this area. Numerous staff are trained in various aspects with the capacity for interventions take place. There are carousels of work and regular meetings on each child. The deputy also leads the North Suffolk SEND group which adds a different dimension.

Mr Bainbridge stated that he had carried out a SEND review at Red Oak and could confirm that there is a strong distributed leadership in SEND with an emphasis on quality first teaching in classrooms. Mrs Madsen continued to inform Trustees that visual aids are in all the classrooms, and inclusion is a core value of the school.

Mrs Quinn asked how the campaign against racism came about. Mrs Madsen explained that this was introduced initially through sport, but acceptance and diversity across the world is now a normal part of the school ethos. The school advocates a culture of fairness and equality.

**Highfield Ely & Highfield Littleport Academies: Mr SIMON BAINBRIDGE**

Mr Dool stated that he was pleased to hear about Mr Bainbridge’s cross-Trust work and the success of the recent SEND conference.

Prof Boddison also commended Mr Bainbridge’s strategic work, adding that a lot had been achieved. He noted the potential for growth referred to in the Strategic Plan and asked if Mr Bainbridge believed another special school could be accommodated by the Trust. Mr Bainbridge replied that the Trust definitely has the potential for another special school, and expressed his disappointment that a bid to run a new school in Norwich was unsuccessful. He added that the Trust has learnt from opening HLA, the expansion of HEA and he was looking forward to being involved in future plans at Chantry and Kingsfield. In response to a further question from Prof Boddison, Mr Bainbridge agreed that the Trust should actively seek to increase its number of special schools.

***Mr Dool thanks the Executive Heads for their attendance, and they left the meeting at this point.***

Mr Bateson noted that it was satisfying to see the path of care and consideration that the original Board of Trustees set upon has come to fruition, with headteachers such as the three who had attended the meeting showing strong evidence for school improvement and personal development.

Mr Dool agreed, adding that there is energetic and enthusiastic leadership across the Trust.

Mr Chamberlain stated that the presentations helped to give context of their school role as a wider role, and showed that the Trust is supporting staff to develop into “One Trust”.