



The Active Learning Trust
ACTIVE LEARNERS • ACTIVE LEADERS • ACTIVE CITIZENS

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**
held on Thursday 8th July 2021
1pm via online Video-link

MINUTES

Trustees & Members
Present:

Ms L. Adams
Mr J. Beswick
Mr S. Chamberlain (CEO)
Mr C. Bush
Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson

Mr D. Bateson
Prof. A. Boddison
Mrs J. Cutchey
Mr R. Dool (Chair)
Mrs C. Quinn

Officers Present:

Mr D. Hilton
Mr C. Paskell

Mrs K. Jarvis

THE KEY DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARISED BELOW	
DECISION	Move forward with proposal to consult on amending Chantry Academy's admission arrangements.
DECISION	Budgets for 2021/22 approved
DECISION	Strategic Plan statements approved
DECISION	Policy review cycle approved
DECISION	Amendments to Complaints Policy approved
DECISION	Amendments to School Admission Arrangements approved
DECISION	Approved schedule of meeting DATES
RECOMMENDATION	To Members that Mrs Amber Thomas become a trustee (following successful meeting with Chair and CEO)
RECOMMENDATION	To Members that Mr Amrit Singh become a trustee
RECOMMENDATION	SC to move forward on growth strategy (on agreed points - see minutes 7.4.(5))

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, NOTICE & QUORUM

1.1. Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Ms Lloyd and Mr Kerr. Prof Boddison, Mrs Quinn and Ms Weaver had sent apologies for not being available for 1pm, but stating that they would be attending.

1.2. All apologies were accepted.

Mr Dool explained that some agenda items would be taken out of order.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2.2. Mr Hely Hutchinson informed trustees that he would be updating his declaration to reflect new employment.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27th MAY 2021

6.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2021 were accepted as a true record.

It was noted that the Action Points from the meeting would all be covered under agenda items.

5. BOARD COMMITTEES

5.1. Trustees noted the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 27th May 2021. It was also noted that the Finance Committee had met prior to this meeting, and had agreed to recommend that the School Budgets for 2021/22 be approved by the Board. Based on this recommendation, Trustees approved School Budgets for 2021/22.

5.2. Trustees noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 27th May 2021. It was also noted that the Audit Committee had met prior to this meeting.

5.3. Trustees noted the minutes of the Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 24th June 2021.

5.4. Trustees noted the minutes of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 24th June 2021.

8. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

8.1. Mr Craig D’Cunha, Executive Principal of Chantry Academy joined the meeting at this point to put forward a proposal that the admission arrangements for Chantry Academy be revised. He took trustees through his proposal, outlining the geography of the local area, the partnerships with Ipswich schools, and the historical arrangements that had been in place prior to Chantry joining The Active Learning Trust. Mr D’Cunha spoke of his belief that all children should be able to walk to their local school. He also explained that the current arrangements allow students from other secondary school catchments to apply to Chantry and were having an impact on transition work in primary schools. Maps of the local area were presented, showing that Chantry sits on the edge of the traditional catchment area, that Mr D’Cunha was suggesting should be reinstated.

Mr Bush questioned that some students who lived very close to Chantry (i.e. just over the catchment border) would not be able to attend their local school. Mr D’Cunha agreed, but pointed out that the demographic of Ipswich mean that families who live in that area did not see themselves as ‘Chantry’ families, but ‘Stoke’ families. He explained that Stoke have an established catchment with closer working relationships with Ranelagh Primary than Sprites Primary.

Mr Dool spoke of his local knowledge of Ipswich. He agreed with Mr D’Cunha’s assessment of the areas, stating that Chantry Academy was built to serve the Chantry Estate, and the sense of pride that Chantry families show in Chantry Academy is evident in the local area.

Mr D’Cunha left the meeting at this point.

Trustees discussed the proposal in detail, including the unusual position of Chantry within the traditional catchment area. Mrs Quinn asked if there had been any consultation with other schools, and was reassured by Mr Dool that the partnership of schools discuss the situation each year.

Trustees agreed that the proposal should move forward, with the next stage being a formal consultation with local stakeholders.

3. CHAIR’S ACTION

3.1. Mr Dool informed trustees that he had approved a building project to replace the fire alarms at Gusford Primary School. He explained that this was an additional urgent capital project, that would cost approx. £60k. The funding is available in this financial year as three other planned projects had not been successful at tender stage.

3.2. Mr Dool informed trustees that he had received a letter of resignation from Mr Anmoal Thethi.

Mr Dool also referred to information distributed to trustees prior to the meeting in which short bios of two potential trustees were given:

Mr Dool and Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that they had met with Mr Amrit Singh. Mr Singh has a strong financial background and, having also met with Mr Beswick and Mr Hely Hutchinson, all involved believed he would be an asset to the Board.

Mr Dool and Mr Chamberlain are meeting with Mrs Amber Thomas on Friday 9th July. Her background and recommendations mark her out as an excellent candidate.

It was agreed that Mr Singh be recommended to the Members as a new trustee. It was also agreed that, pending a successful meeting with Mr Dool and Mr Chamberlain, Mrs Thomas be recommended to Members as a new trustee.

6. ITT & ECF STRATEGY & BUSINESS PLAN

Mr Chamberlain updated trustees on actions since the last meeting. ALT is part of a pilot programme where personnel are employed as TAs with a view to moving to teacher training.

Mr Paskell shared a power point presentation on the Initial Teacher Training and Early Careers Framework budget plan, and explained how this will feed into a full Business Plan.

Prof Boddison asked if there was a minimum number needed to make the programme viable, or whether there is a maximum number the Trust can accommodate. Mr Chamberlain replied that the first year is being supported financially from the Central budget, but should be self-sufficient from year 2. The maximum number will depend on capacity in schools and so will not be capped, but each year an assessment will be made to consider whether an increase in numbers could compromise quality of delivery. It was agreed that a full Business Plan should be produced to support the initiative.

7. CEO'S REPORT

7.1. Trustees confirmed that they had received the CEO's report prior to the meeting and had reviewed its contents. Mr Chamberlain went through the report that Trustees had received, highlighting the following:

7.2. Trust Data Dashboard.

The latest dashboard dials were presented. Trustees confirmed they had had the opportunity to review the data prior to the meeting, and are now familiar with the format of the dials.

7.3. Trust Strategic Plan towards 2025.

Mr Chamberlain presented on the Mission, Vision and Values section of the Strategic Plan. He quoted that "all ALT children and young people will learn, thrive and lead active lives as active learners, active leaders and active citizens".

Mr Hilton commented that there has been a shift from Ofsted from results to the quality of education. He explained that this can be evidenced in the dials, and work has started to guide headteachers in this change of culture. Mr Dool commented that disadvantaged pupils were not explicitly mentioned in the Plan overview – it was recognised that this area is covered within the plan detail.

Mr Bush stated that he doesn't disagree with the statements, but asked how they will become deliverable and a liveable reality in schools. Mr Chamberlain responded by explaining that the impact of work with executive leaders will be evident through the Learning Commission and will show student involvement. Plus, the rigorous school improvement modules, including stages of intervention, that are now in place will assist with evidence.

Mr Bush asked what is meant by 'Active Learning' – what will it look like? Mr Chamberlain referred to the Whole Trust conference on 1st September, when this concept will be introduced to staff of all twenty-one schools. The conference will frame a vision on what makes ALT unique and will spend some time focusing on how to re-introducing 'Active' into the curriculum.

Trustees thanked Mr Chamberlain and the executive team for their work in this area, and confirmed they approve of the statements as presented.

7.4. Growth Strategy.

Mr Chamberlain opened a discussion on future growth plans for the Trust. He outlined options and explained the pros and cons of each, and an in-depth discussion took place.

Mr Dool stated that he felt the Trust needs to review the position of current schools and consider the work required to move each forward. He added that the Trust needs to be clear on its unique selling points when brokering partnerships for growth. When asked for his opinion on the Trust's USP, Mr Chamberlain referenced two key areas:

1. The work in the Trust on the quality of the curriculum across phases, and how this is maximised.
2. Being a member of an organisation – teacher training, networks, opportunities, and 'The Power of Us'.

Prof Boddison stated that he believed that if growth is considered it should be within the Trust's current geographical areas. He added that growth must be balanced (referring to types of schools).

Mr Bateson said that, irrespective of size, the Trust needs to be clear that it can offer the highest quality continual provision. He added that ALT is already a large MAT, school improvement is what matters most, and ALT needs to ensure that it doesn't weaken or sabotage the good work already being undertaken by overstressing resources. Mr Bateson did however state that he was in favour of the Trust growing – but with caution.

Mr Chamberlain agreed, saying that it's not how big you grow, but about how growth will benefit children already in the Trust and those who would be joining it.

Mr Dool restated that he believed any growth should be around the Trust's current geographical areas, and should not expand too far. Any opportunities that arise must be the right 'fit' for the Trust.

It was agreed that promotional material was needed. Mr Chamberlain stated that he has faith in the direction and energy of the Executive Team to market the Trust in such a way as to make it attractive to other schools and smaller MATs.

It was agreed that:

1. Mr Chamberlain should explore the view of the RSC
2. There should be a cautious growth and expansion plan
3. Promotional evidence be gathered of ALT success
4. The Trust should look for opportunities that fit with the views of Trustees and the Executive Team
5. Consideration should be given to the balance between mainstream and special schools

9. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

9.1. Policies.

Trustees confirmed that they had received and reviewed the report from Mrs Jarvis that outlined the work that the Trust undertakes on policies, and how this supports the work in schools. Mr Dool thanked Mrs Jarvis for her explanation, stating that he now felt secure in the knowledge that the Board and the Central Team are carrying out their responsibilities in this area. As recommended in the report:

The Board approved the review cycle for policies and documents as presented
The Board approved the amendments to the Complaints Policy for the Trust

The Board approved an addition to School Admission Arrangements documents as recommended in DFE guidance.

9.2. Safeguarding

It was noted that Safeguarding was covered under Item 5.4.

9.3. Health & Safety

Trustees noted the content of the report on Health & Safety. It was recognised that this area continues to improve, and schools have responded well to continual changes in guidance relating to COVID.

External Health & Safety Audits will resume in the Autumn term.

10. TIMES & DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

10.1. Future Meetings Schedule

Trustees approved the dates of the schedule as presented with a blend of face-to-face and on-line meetings. However, it was suggested that the Strategy meeting planned for May be moved to earlier in the year. Mrs Jarvis was asked to amend the schedule to reflect this, and redistribute the schedule to all.

Mr Dool closed the meeting by thanking all Trustees for their support over the last year, which all recognised has been challenging. He reflected on problems tackled and solved, high quality intervention, development and growth, and improvement in schools. He made particular reference to the way in which students and staff have been looked after and kept safe during the pandemic. He added that he felt the Board is in as strong a position as it has ever been and looked forward to working with everyone in the future.

Mr Dool thanked Mr Chamberlain and the Central Team, and asked that thanks from the Board be passed to all school staff via the end of term newsletter.



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ACTION POINTS

Agenda Item	Who?	Action	Timeline
3	KJ	Contact Members with a view to appointing new Trustees	During Summer
6.	CP	Produce full business plan to support ITT & ECF initiative	For next meeting
7.3	SC	Launch the vision of 'Active Learning' at the Trust Conference	01.09.21
7.4	SC	The Trust should look for opportunities that fit with the views of Trustees and the Executive Team	Ongoing
10	KJ	Revise meetings on annual schedule, whilst retaining dates	During Summer