



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

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST
*held on Thursday 13th October 2022
1pm via online Video-link***

MINUTES

Trustees & Members
Present:

Mr J. Beswick

Mr M. Cole

Mr R. Dool (Chair)

Mr B. Stickle

Mr C. Bush

Mrs J. Cutchey

Mr M. Kerr

Ms R. Weaver BEM

Officers Present:

Mr C. D’Cunha

Ms E. Hammond

Mr C. Paskell (from item 2)

Mr D. Hilton (from item 2)

Mrs K. Jarvis (clerk)

Invited Guest:

Mrs J. Milsom (for item 9)

THE KEY DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARISED BELOW	
DECISION	Ratified appointment of CEO
RECOMMENDATION	Mr Peter Dabrowa recommended as Trustee
DECISION	Mrs Mandy Marsh approved as chair of governors at the Isle of Ely Primary School

MINUTES

1. CEO RECRUITMENT

Mr Dool informed the Board that Items 9 & 10 would be taken earlier in the agenda to allow for confidentiality (for items 1 & 9) and participation from Mrs Milsom (item 10).

Mr Dool updated Trustees on the successful completion of the recruitment process to appoint a new CEO to ALT. Mr Dool had spoken to twenty potential candidates, with fifteen applications being received. Five candidates were shortlisted and interviewed over two days.

Mr Dool thanked all involved in the process. He also recognised and thanked Mr D’Cunha for his invaluable support since the resignation of the previous CEO, and his contribution to moving the Trust forward in the interim period.

The Board were asked to ratify the appointment.

The proposal was proposed by Mr Beswick, Seconded by Mr Bush and carried unanimously.

10. TRUST STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT – CST REVIEW

Trustees confirmed that they had received and reviewed the CST report of the Central Services and team structure, which was commissioned with the CST and carried out by Mr Malcolm Trobe July to September 2022. Mr Dool explained that the covering paper had been written to summarise the main points of the report and suggest actions going forward. He added that he felt there are two key issues for Trustees, with all other aspects being structural and systematic.

Mr Dool closed the discussion by asking that progress be reported to the Board on 8th December.

Mrs Milsom, Mr Paskell and Mr Hilton joined the meeting at this point.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, NOTICE & QUORUM

2.1. Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Ms Adams and Mrs Quinn.

2.2. Apologies were accepted.

2.3. Mr Dool introduced and welcomed Mr Miles Cole to his first ALT Board meeting. He reminded Trustees of Mr Cole’s background and how valuable his contributions to the Trust have been at LGB level.

9. SIXTH FORM DEVELOPMENT

Mr Dool introduced Mrs Milsom and explained how she had been working with Cromwell Community College and Neale-Wade Academy Sixth Forms.

Mrs Milsom spoke to the report she had written, which had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. She highlighted the following:

- Mrs Milsom has been working with the schools for nearly two years, and couldn't have wished for better leadership teams to work with.
- During this time she has seen a marked improvement in the classroom.
- She predicted that 6th form results will remain unstable nationally for a couple of years following recent issues.
- There have been significant changes in methods, including independent teaching.
- Mrs Milsom pointed out that there are currently no dedicated 6th form teachers at either school.
- Teachers have taken on-board reviews and suggestions, resulting in students now working harder.
- Behaviour in 6th form is not an issue at either school.
- Schools have embraced the work, and invested in 6th form areas to create a positive environment.
- Mrs Milsom genuinely believes that there will be good future outcomes, however she cautioned that good 6th form can only come from good GCSE teaching.

Mr Stickley asked why there isn't more collaboration across the schools, with specialist teachers employed. Mrs Milsom explained that there are timetabling issues as teachers are also teaching GCSE, but added that there is a proposal that NWA will employ a subject specialist next year. Mr Dool suggested that Mr D'Cunha have further discussions with the schools on how specialist teaching can be achieved collaboratively.

Mr Dool asked Trustees to note that both Principals were pleased with the input from Mrs Milsom. He asked how the Board can be assured that the work to date is embedded once Mrs Milsom steps back. Mrs Milsom explained that her work was to implement strategy, and leave the schools with the tools to develop themselves. Mr Hilton added that follow-up work from Mrs Cassidy is already in place and has helped to raise the profile of 6th form. Both schools are motivated and starting to bring about change.

A substantial government grant is available to develop 6th forms nationally – unfortunately, despite several attempts – it has proven impossible to access the portal to date. Mr Paskell, Mrs Milsom and schools have raised issues with the portal providers and are awaiting a response. Mr Dool asked Mr D'Cunha to ensure that this is investigated as a matter of urgency due to the upcoming deadline for submission.

Mr Dool thanks Mrs Milsom for her report and for attending the meeting. He also took the opportunity to thank her for her work with Gusford Primary School.

Mrs Milsom left the meeting at this point.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3.2. Mrs Jarvis clarified to Trustees that there is a need for each to complete a declaration of business interests that includes names of close relatives. This is a requirement that the external auditors are insisting upon, and failure to do so is likely to result in a management point in the annual accounts.

4. BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1. Mrs Jarvis took Trustees through a report that had been previously circulated.
- A Vice-Chair for the Board is required following the resignation of Mrs Lloyd
 - Two Chairs of Committees were established temporarily during the last academic year and will need to be reconsidered by committees when they next meet.

4.2. Following a positive meeting with Mr Dool, it is proposed that Mr Peter Dabrowa be approved by the Board to become a Trustee. Mr Dabrowa was duly approved, and the Members of the Active Learning Trust will be asked to ratify his appointment.

4.3. Mrs Jarvis gave a brief update on the local governing body membership, including vacancies, and names of Chairs. She asked that the Board accept Mrs Mandy Marsh to the role Chair for the Isle of Ely Primary School. This was approved unanimously.

5. CHAIR'S ACTIONS

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6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th JULY 2022

6.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2022 were agreed as a true record, with no technical corrections.

4.2. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising, that were not be covered by the main agenda.

7. BOARD COMMITTEES

7.1. Trustees noted the minutes of the Finance committee held on 14th July 2022. Mr Dool gave verbal feedback on the meeting held on the morning of 13th October 2022 by asking Trustees to note that rebased budgets had been agreed, and that the committee have asked that conversations are held with schools with high levels of reserves. This was considered particularly urgent for schools with an Ofsted grading of RI. LECA's budget was also discussed (remembering that the Board retain overview of LECA's finances).

7.2. Trustees noted the minutes of the Audit committee held on 14th July 2022 and received verbal feedback on the meeting held on the morning of 13th October 2022. Mr Beswick reported that cyber security was discussed and a full IT strategy was requested. He also asked Trustees to note that three items had been increased to 'maximum risk' on the central Risk Register, and a further four risks had been increased. All are being addressed.

Mr Stickley asked how the central Trust Risk Register reflects the risk registers of individual schools. Following discussion, it was agreed that ELT be asked to consider systems and processes and report to the next meeting.

Mr Cole expressed his surprise that the Risk Register was not a standing agenda item for the Board. Mrs Jarvis reminded the Board that Trustees agreed to move the responsibility for review of the Risk Register to the Audit committee last term. Mr D'Cunha pointed out that the Risk Register is now split into areas of responsibility for each committee, with the Audit Committee retaining an overview, and that key risks are covered within the ACEO report.

Mr Stickley asked if there are any overarching core principles for behaviour. Mr D'Cunha explained that each school has its own behaviour policy. Mr Hilton added that there are core principles around the curriculum. Mr Dool suggested that it is timely to conduct an audit on this and other policy/ guideline areas across the Trust so that Trustees can be

assured that where policies are developed at school level, as opposed to those that are ALT policies, they contain “core ALT principles” and monitoring systems are in place to ensure this happens.

7.3. Trustees noted the minutes of the Quality of Education committee meeting held on 15th September 2022

7.4. Trustees noted the minutes of the Employment, Performance & Reward Committee (formerly Personnel & Remuneration) meeting held on 15th September 2022.

8. ASSISTANT CEO’s REPORT

Trustees confirmed they had received and reviewed the ACEO report prior to the meeting. Mr D’Cunha took Trustees through his report and highlighted the following:

Section 1

- a) The opening section gave context to the Trust, including base school information.
- b) Mr D’Cunha reported on the Ofsted inspection at Grove Primary School’s which took place on 11th and 12th October. Mrs Cutchey was thanked for her work as Chair of the school. Mrs Cutchey stated that governors were praised by inspectors for their work at Grove.
- c) A recent inspection at Gusford Primary School (4th and 5th October) judged the school to remain at RI - with three areas of Good.
- d) A section 8 inspection at Sidegate Primary School on 5th and 6th October will result in a letter stating that the school remains a Good school.
- e) The Ofsted report for Burrowmoor Primary School has been released and reported in the local press. The amended Statement of Action and actions undertaken to date, will be presented to the Quality of Education Committee.
- f) Mr D’Cunha reported on a productive team day for central staff and associated leaders, where first drafts of a service charter were produced by directorates.
- g) Mr D’Cunha has commenced headteacher PMRs, with three targets being the key focus – One Trust; School Culture; Quality of Education. PMRs have been shared with the education team to alleviate CEO workload.
- h) Mr D’Cunha reported that Mrs Shirley Young has been appointed to the role of Safeguarding Lead for the Trust. She will work alongside Insight to audit, review and support schools in this area.
- i) The Regional Director’s office has issued warning letters to schools with two or more subsequent RI judgements from Ofsted. For ALT these include Gusford, Hillside and Grove. Letters of representation, have been requested and will be submitted, alongside evidence of improvement, by early November. In response to a question from Mr Dool, Mr Hilton reported that internal colleagues and external consultants are in the schools regularly to ensure the pace of improvement.
- j) Mr D’Cunha reported that he had met with Joy Latchford and Jackie Bax from the Regional Director’s. Regular monthly meetings have been planned with RD officers.
- k) In response to a question from Mrs Cutchey, Mr D’Cunha stated that LECA’s first monitoring visit is due “any day”. Mr Dool asked how regularly LECA’s IEB meet. Mr D’Cunha replied that meetings are held on a monthly basis

Section 2

- a) Mr Paskell reported on some financial elements, stating that it is likely to be a difficult financial year for schools. He reported on changes in LGPS contributions and the removal of the Health & Social Care Levy.
- b) It was agreed that Mr D’Cunha should move forward with establishing a fit-for-purpose IT Strategy. Mr Paskell reported that he will be meeting with the IT team

from Meridian Trust. He added that there isn't a lack of desire in this area – rather a lack of capacity. Trustees felt that this area needs to be moved on as a matter of critical urgency as the implications, e.g. cyber security, would be immense. Mr Paskell reassured Trustees that all schools will have on-line back-ups by half-term.

Section 3

- a) Data was presented to show the distribution of Ofsted grades across the Trust.

Section 4

- a) Yorkshire & Humberside University have not been accredited for ECF. Meetings are planned with Ambition (who are merging with another provider) to secure accreditation for our students going forward.

Section 5

- b) Mr D’Cunha referred to a report from Mrs Jane Horn, Principal at Cromwell Community College. Mrs Horn had been asked to contact local heads and hold a light touch conversation around LGB structure and success. The view of the Board is that parents are a vital resource that need to remain involved in school governance. It was noted that training sessions are poorly attended and an alternative system should be considered.

Section 6

- a) Work with external partnerships was highlighted.
- b) Trustees acknowledged the data presented on Key Dials.

Mr Dool thanked Mr D’Cunha for his report.

11. POLICIES & STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

Trustees asked that future documents presented be in the standardised format with clarity around what trustees are being asked to do e.g. approve or note. Also use version control, provide authors details and appropriate overview added.

11a. Safeguarding Overview Policy Statement

Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees that the Trust overview statement for Safeguarding had been amended to reflect the updates for KCSiE September 2022.

The highlighted changes were approved.

11b. Exclusion Policy

Mrs Jarvis explained that the Exclusion Policy has been updated to reflect changes in the DfE Exclusion Guidance. A summary of changes was presented for Trustees. The updated policy is available to view on the Trust website as a working document, pending ratification.

The required amendments were approved for inclusion in the Policy.

11c. Scheme of Delegation

Mrs Jarvis explained that the annual review and update of the Scheme of Delegation has been deferred to allow for work on the CST.

11d. Data Protection Officer’s Annual Report

Trustees noted the content of the report from the Trust’s Data Protection Officer and noted the work being undertaken in this area across all schools.

11e. Data Protection Policy

Mrs Driver had submitted the Data Protection Policy with required updates highlighted.

The highlighted changes were approved.

11f. Appraisal & Capability Policy

Ms Hammond explained that the terminology of the policy had been updated. She added that the policy would need to be reviewed by trade unions.

Trustees approved changes to the policy and agreed that Ms Hammond should present the amended document to trade unions.

11g. Code of Conduct Policy

Mrs Hammond explained that terminology and other minor amendments had been included.

Trustees approved the changes to the policy.

12. TIMES & DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Trustees confirmed they had received a copy of the 2022/23 meeting schedule. Mrs Jarvis asked if there was any appetite to hold an in-person meeting in May. It was agreed that a full day be planned, and acknowledged that the Finance and Audit Committees will need to be rescheduled.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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UNAPPROVED



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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ACTION POINTS

Agenda Item	Who?	Action	Timeline
9	CDC	Follow up on IT issues relating to 6 th form grant access	Urgent due to deadline
9	CDC	Discuss specialist teachers of 6 th form with schools	By next meeting
9	DH	Discuss recommendations of JM verbal report be listed	By next meeting
3.2	ALL	Declaration Forms to be completed in full by all	URGENT
4.1	ALL	Consider Vice Chair and Board Committee chairs	By next committee meetings
4.2	KJ	Ask Members to confirm appointment of Peter Dabrowa	ASAP
7.2	ELT	Consider Risk Register processes	By next meeting
7.2	CDC	Behaviour Policy reviews in schools	By Spring term
8.2b	CDC	Move forward to establish fit-for-purpose IT strategy	Urgent
11	ELT	Standardise templates and formats of ALT documents	By Spring term
12	KJ	Organise May Board meeting to be in-person and reschedule finance and Audit committees	By next meeting