



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

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST
*held on Thursday 21st October 2021
1pm via online Video-link***

MINUTES

Trustees & Members
Present:

Mr D. Bateson OBE
Mr S. Chamberlain (CEO)
Mr C. Bush
Ms M. Lloyd
Ms R. Weaver BEM

Prof. A. Boddison
Mrs J. Cutchey
Mr R. Dool (Chair)
Mr M. Kerr

Officers Present:

Mr C. D’Cunha
Ms E. Hammond
Mr C. Paskell

Mr D. Hilton
Mrs K. Jarvis

THE KEY DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARISED BELOW	
DECISION	Approved admission arrangement amendments for PPS & NWA
DECISION	Rejected admission arrangement amendments for CRM
DECISION	Approved Red Oak project build
DECISION	Approved increased to capital spend for KPS
DECISION	Approved energy procurement route as presented in line with OJEC
DECISION	Approved annual audit schedule
RECOMMENDATION	

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, NOTICE & QUORUM

1.1. Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Ms Adams, Mr Beswick, Mr Hely Hutchinson, Mr Singh and Mrs Quinn.

1.2. All apologies were accepted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2.2. Trustees were reminded that they should return an updated declaration of interests form to Mrs Jarvis.

3. Board & Committee Membership

3.1. Annual Consideration of Committee Members & Chairs for 2021/22

Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees that one nomination had been received for Chair and one nomination had been received for Vice-Chair of the Board.

Mr Robert Dool and Ms Marion Lloyd were duly elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Prof. Boddison informed Trustees that he would be stepping down from Christmas due to work commitments. He stated that it had been a privilege to work with Trustees and the central ALT team.

Mr Dool also informed Trustees that he had received a letter of resignation from Mr Hely Hutchinson. He thanked both Prof. Boddison and Mr Hely Hutchinson for their commitment and noted that both resignations would require new chairs for Board committees. Mr Dool spoke of the need for succession planning, and informed Trustees that he and Mr Chamberlain were meeting with three potential new Trustees in the near future. All agreed that the appointment of Chairs for committees should be reviewed at their respective next meetings and a further discussion/update take place at the next meeting. Ms Weaver volunteered to join the Finance Committee and Mr Dool will become Acting Chair in the interim period.

3.2. Requirements for Trustees

Mrs Jarvis reminded Trustees of the requirement to complete Safeguarding training in line with amendments to KCSiE September 2021. All Trustees will be sent details of on-line training and certificates should be returned to Mrs Jarvis for registration.

3.3. Update on Governing Bodies

It was noted that this item will be covered under the CEO report.

4. CHAIR'S ACTION

Mr Dool informed Trustees that he had undertaken two Chair's Actions since the last meeting. This was to approve additional spend on capital works as follows:

Red Oak Primary School. The Board had previously approved £33k to improve fire systems. The revised cost will be £44k.

Westwood Primary School. The Board had previously approved £26k to increase the number of fire detection units. The revised costs will be £32k.

Additional work is required at both sites to ensure compliance, and has been logged as a KPI fail for Barkers as the original work was not adequately specified. Trustees were assured by Mr Paskell that costs could be covered by Capital funds.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY 2021

5.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2021 were accepted as a true record, with one technical amendment being requires under 7.4 – para 6 should read Suffolk PRU – not Cambridgeshire PRU.

5.2. Matters Arising & Action Points

Mr Dool informed Trustees that Amber Thomas had decided not to accept the offer to become a Trustee due to time commitments.

Mr Dool asked for an update on the ITT Business Plan. Mr Chamberlain explained that this is being updated in light of changes in ITT contract provision. He added that Sarah Martin is in discussion with Ambition Institute and contingency plans and potential alternatives will be added to the Business Plan to reflect changes in Government guidance. This will be presented to the next Board meeting

Mr Chamberlain reported that a meeting with the Deputy Regional Schools Commissioner has been arranged for 23rd November, where Trust proposals for growth will be discussed.

Mr Dool asked that a "Principles for " statement be presented at the December Board meeting following the meeting with the RSC.

6. BOARD COMMITTEES

6.1. Trustees noted the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 9th July 2021. It was also noted that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for the morning of 21st October had been postponed due to being under-quorate. Trustees were asked to consider three urgent actions at the end of the meeting.

Mr Bush asked why the capital projects planned for Red Oak, Gusford and Hillside did not take place, and what the plans are for progressing the work. Mr Paskell explained that the schools had been unable to accommodate contractors within the scheduled timeframes. He confirmed that no works have been cancelled – but have been rescheduled.

6.2. Trustees noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 9th July 2021. It was also noted that the Audit Committee meeting scheduled for the morning of 21st October had been postponed due to being under-quorate.

6.3. Trustees noted the minutes of the Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 7th October 2021.

6.4. Trustees noted the minutes of the Personnel & Remuneration Committee meeting held on 7th October 2021.

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:

Section 1: Attendance & COVID 19 Cases

- Ipswich has the highest percentage of cases in the country
- NWA will be hosting a vaccination van during half-term
- 66% of secondary students have taken up the vaccination offer
- Mock exams will continue in November
- Two headteachers have contracted COVID, and support is being given to schools
- Heads are having to be creative with staffing
- Staff wellbeing is paramount

Section 2: Strategic Plan: Staff Conferences

- The whole staff conference was held early September to avoid term-time disruption
- The conference was recorded to allow those unable to attend the opportunity to view content at a later date.
- The Trust Strategy Plan was presented to all staff
- ELT have met with the Exec heads group
- The virtual conference is a significant saving on previous face-2-face conferences
- Feedback has been positive, with follow up work planned.
- Dates are being considered for next year

Section 3: Branding & Website Update

- Identified where branding works – gives a sense of 'belonging' to all students and staff
- Bronze badges issued to staff as a 'thank you' for work during the pandemic
- New signs for schools are being ordered as required – Earith first
- updated photos of schools and pupils are being taken
- A promotional brochure has been procured – with production planned pre-Christmas. There will be an update on progress at the next Board meeting in December.
- The Trust website needs updating - will become the responsibility of the Executive Assistant once appointed. Colleagues will be advised when this appointment and subsequent update has been achieved.

Section 4: Governance & Training

- Hillside require a new chair and two parent governors (elections underway)
- NWA require a new chair due to recent resignation
- Recruitment emails and adverts have been sent out – heads have been asked to look at community links
- Mr Dool and Mr Chamberlain are, as part of succession planning, reviewing strategies to support the development of governors into Chairs and local governors/ Chairs into Trustees. This will need to be part of a package which aims to support the recruitment of governors through marketing within local communities with the involvement of school leaders.
- Ms Weaver suggested linking with Parish Councils who know the communities well

- Training programmes are available with the National College – Trustees are awaiting logon details
- Mr Hilton spoke about the offer from the National College, and how the Trust are using it to assess progress, impact and engagement. All courses are high quality and accredited.
- Other training providers have been added to draw all together and develop a bespoke marketing and communications strategy.

Section 5: People Strategy

- Ms Hammond is beginning to work on Strategy that will move away from the traditional HR element towards a broader people strategy
- Four Strategy Pillars will be: Work & Culture, Reward & Recognition, Growth & Development and Connection to the Trust
- Mrs Brooks is developing a Data Warehouse that will store data from all aspects of the Trust
- A programme from Blue Sky is being considered to improve PMR and Appraisal processes
- There is a noticeable shift in using systems to collate and analyse data
- Ms Hammond gave Trustees a brief overview of her initial visits to schools, stating that it will take time to develop and embed systems. She added that there is a raft of comparable data available, and she will be working with Mrs Brooks to develop this area
- Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that he has agreed for ALT to be part of a benchmarking programme with other Trusts

Section 6: Schools & Central Team Development

- A successful central staff conference was held on 6th October
- Focus on high quality support
- No blame approach – asked all to reflect on delivery and relate this to operating model
- Self-evaluation using RATER model – follow up work to take place to identify strengths and weaknesses. Schools will be asked for their views
- Mr Hilton spoke of the reflection process schools are asked to undertake following Ofsted conversations, which include lessons learned. Prof. Boddison asked if these are recorded centrally, and Mr Hilton explained that they are not, but are shared openly and used to adapt standing operating procedures.
- Athene have produced a Perception Survey that Exec Heads will take to their clusters for reflection and update
- ELT have met with executive heads. Mr Chamberlain reported a strong sense of cohesion in the group. Exec heads have been asked to check with clusters if this is felt at all levels.
- Mr Hilton stated that all going forward will be work evidence and research based, to ensure shared principles across the Trust
- Mr D’Cunha stated that some heads are worried about losing their schools’ individual identities
- Mr Chamberlain said that schools are being informed of non-negotiables and where principles should be aligned

Section 7: Safeguarding Accreditation

- Work is ongoing with a cultural consultant from the Safeguarding Alliance
- Kite marks will be applied for alongside safeguarding awards
- Shirley Young is carrying out governance and inclusion training

Section 8: ALT Institute of Teaching & Leadership

Mr Hilton informed Trustees that a set of principles have been written for the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. These are based on research and evidence, including the 2019 Ofsted Framework. A resource base will be built that gives examples of good practice and how to move forward. Mr Dool informed Trustees that this had been presented to the Quality of Education Committee and a healthy debate took place. Mr Chamberlain stated that the feedback from heads has been strong and they have felt involved in the process rather than had the process dictated to them. Heads understand that they will be driving the process and will hold staff to account. The principles are based around the work of the Education Team and advocate consistency of offer.

An Associate Leader Programme is available to have work recognised with ATT and SSAT. Aspiring heads will be able to develop and the programme will assist with recruitment and retention. There is also a plan to run a future heads programme. Deputies have requested their own support network.

Four colleagues have been offered a place on a national Women's Leadership Programme, funded from the central budget. This is to support those lacking confidence rather than those lacking in expertise.

Head colleagues have been attending an accredited course with the East Anglian Anti-Racism Education Collective. Mrs Quinn has also been attending this recognised training on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Mr Chamberlain reported that all schools are part-way through the Race Charter mark.

Section 9: National Leadership Centre

Mr Chamberlain reported on a leadership residential that he recently attended led by the Cabinet Office. He spoke of a resulting scheme that is being introduced to schools that will make a significant impact on communities by contributing to a practical approach towards addressing coercive control and developing healthy relationships. Trustees were asked to contact Mr Chamberlain if they would like to become involved.

Section 10: Grant Assistance Programme Update

Mr Chamberlain updated Trustees on the work that Mrs Driver carries out on behalf of schools to bid for grants in all areas. She has successfully bid for £59k during the last academic year. Trustees asked that their thanks be registered to Mrs Driver.

Section 11: ICT Strategy

Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that there are evolving issues and challenges with ICT across the Trust. Members of the central team are looking at capacity and costs. Mr Paskell reported that the plan for summer work was completed on track, but there are some residual issues with migration and tenancy. He stated that lessons have been learned. Mr Chamberlain agreed, adding that there must be a commitment to do better.

Section 12: Buildings & Estates

Mr Paskell reported that there is no movement on the Carr street project in Ipswich, and the latest expectation is that the build will overrun to January 2024. Pupil number forecasts are low. In response to a question from Mr Bush, Mr Paskell reported that, should the DfE decide not to go ahead, the Trust would not have any financial liability (at this stage) as a £30k set up grant has been received. Mrs Weaver asked if there is any new or social housing due to be built in the area – Mr Paskell did not have this information. Mr Dool spoke of the need to inject new life into Ipswich Town Centre and his belief that if the school is built it will be a popular choice with parents.

Mr D’Cunha updated Trustees on work for the Peile Unit based at Chantry Academy. The unit currently hosts fourteen students, who are educated off site. The dedicated unit is due to be built by Easter 2022 and the students will be fully integrated with the school.

Mr Dool asked if the term ‘unit’ could be changed to ‘centre’. Mr D’Cunha replied that ‘unit’ is a working title and can be changed when the building is complete.

Section 13: Strategic Plan Links

Trustees held a useful discussion about the expectations of their role in supporting with the Strategic Plan.

Ms Lloyd stated that she would appreciate the opportunity to visit schools, but was conscious that visits need to be focused on the strategic plan rather than just a walk around the school. Mr Dool agreed that face-2-face visits are preferred, but acknowledged the point made by Mrs Weaver that visits should only take place if Public Health advice concurs.

It was agreed that part of a future Board meeting should be given over to breakout sessions so that Trustees can agree on a uniform approach. Mr Dool, Mr Chamberlain and Mrs Jarvis will meet to discuss and set principles. Mr Bush suggested that the session takes place on 10th February. Mrs Jarvis will liaise on diary dates.

Trustees noted the content of Mr Chamberlain’s comprehensive report and thanked him for its detail.

8. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Trustees confirmed that they had received and reviewed the report sent by Mrs Jarvis on Admission Arrangements. The report covered the legal requirement to review arrangements annually, proposed amendments to Published Admission Numbers (PAN) and Operational PANs already in place in schools.

Trustees approved the amendment of Pakefield Primary Schools’ PAN from 60 to 30 due to a falling roll.

Trustees approved the amendment of Neale-Wade Academy’s PAN from 300 to 270, taking into account recent numbers on roll.

Both amendments will come into effect for pupil admissions in September 2023.

Trustees noted that Operational PANs are in place at Neale-Wade Academy, Chantry Academy, Cromwell Community College, Pakefield Primary School, Hillside Primary School and Earith Primary School.

Trustees rejected a request from Cromwell Community College to amend their Admission Arrangements to restrict admission for primary and secondary phases. It was agreed that Cromwell is an all-through school and admissions should be considered as such.

9. POLICIES AND STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

9.1.a. Safeguarding Policy

Trustees ratified the Trust overview Policy for Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare. Mrs Jarvis confirmed that each school will also have their own Safeguarding Policy that outlines individual processes.

9.1.b. Scheme of Delegation

Trustees approved amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as presented. Mr Dool requested that an additional amendment be made to include the work of the Safeguarding

Committee. This was agreed and Mrs Jarvis will update the Scheme before distributing it to schools.

9.1.c. Data Protection Officers Report

Trustees noted the content of the annual report from the Trust's Data Protection Officer.

10. TIMES & DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

10.1. Future Meetings Schedule

Trustees confirmed that they had received the meeting dates and times for the academic year. It was requested that Mrs Jarvis resend the schedule, highlighting the changes in times.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

As agreed in item 6, Trustees were asked to consider four items that would usually be discussed at Finance and Audit Committees.

1. Finance Committee: Energy Procurement

Mr Paskell asked that Trustees approve the suggested route for future energy procurement in line with OJEC. It was confirmed that this was the route recommended by Stone King Solicitors.

Trustees approved the proposal as presented

2. Finance Committee: Red Oak Build Project

Mr Paskell asked that Trustees approve the build project for Red Oak Primary School. He explained that this needed to be approved by Trustees as the project will exceed £250k.

Trustees approved the proposal as presented.

3. Finance Committee: Kingfield Capital Works

Mr Paskell asked that Trustees approve an additional 33% of capital spend for the summer holiday project at Kingsfield Primary School. This is necessary as the increase is outside of agreed limits. Mr Dool asked why the increase is so high and whose responsibility it is to ensure the work is completed within agreed costs. Mr Paskell replied that the output specification was not clear and the additional work was only seen as essential once the building work had commenced. He stated that lessons have been learned and more planning would take place in future. In response to a question from Trustees, Mr Paskell was able to confirm that the additional funding was available from the Schools Capital Allocation.

Trustees approved the spend as detailed.

4. Audit Committee: Annual Audit Schedule

Trustees were asked to approve the annual programme of audits for Mrs Driver's work.

Trustees approved the schedule as presented.

Mr Dool closed the meeting by stating that he felt the Trust was moving in the right direction in most areas. He was clear that Trustees would need to review and see the impact of the curriculum work outlined in item 7, Section 8. However, he also stated that it was evident that ICT and procurement had not moved as quickly. Mr Chamberlain agreed,

acknowledging that there is more work to do in these areas, and stating this would form part of the operational model review currently being undertaken.



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST
held on Thursday 21st October 2021**

ACTION POINTS

Agenda Item	Who?	Action	Timeline
2.1	All	Return Declaration of Interest forms to KJ	ASAP
5.2	CP	Produce/update on full business plan to support ITT & ECF initiative	next meeting
5.2	SC	Principles for growth statement	Meeting following RSC meeting
3.2	KJ	Provide logon details for National College	ASAP
3.2	ALL	Complete Safeguarding training & return evidence to KJ	ASAP
4	SC	Draw together training offer into the development of a bespoke marketing and communications strategy	Update next meeting
7.3	SC	Update on progress of promotional brochure	Next meeting
7.3	SC	Update on website following appointment of Executive Assistant	Next meeting
7.6	KJ	Send conference quiz to Trustees	With minutes
7.9	ALL	Contact SC if interested in being involved in scheme to develop understanding of coercive control	By next meeting
7.13	KJ, RD & SC	Liaise on agenda to develop Trustees link role	By next meeting
10	KJ	Highlight timing changes on meeting schedule	With minutes
11	SC	Update on operations module, particularly relating to ICT and procurement	Next meeting