

**Minutes of Members' and Directors' Meeting
19 June 2020 9am via Google Meet**

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mr C Hopkins (CHo) (Chair of Members), Mr D Grewer (DG) (Member), Mr M Welton (MW) (in place of Claire Shaw, Member), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mr C Bradshaw-Smith (CBS) (Director), Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director)

Also present for Item 7: Mr D Dovydaitis (DD) (MLG Education Services) and Ms S Cole (SCo) (Finance Manager).
Clerk: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse
SM: St Mary's
TH: The Howard

SLT - Senior Leadership Team
CIF: Condition Improvement Funding
ESFA: Education and Skills Funding Agency
FAR: Finance, Audit and Risk
TCAF: Trust Capacity Fund
RSC: Regional Schools Commissioners
KPIs: Key Performance Indicators
NPQH: National Professional Qualification for Headship

1. **Welcome, Prayer** - PL welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Matthew Welton from the Lichfield Diocese. CHo led the prayer.
2. **Apologies** - There were apologies from Rev Simon Davies (SD), Claire Shaw (CS) (MW attending in CS's place) and Julie Smith (JS). AH will update the attendance register.
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - Directors and Members confirmed that there were no changes to pecuniary interest declarations.
4. **Minutes of last meetings** - The minutes of the Directors' meeting held on 1.5.20 were agreed as a true copy by Directors, with a slight rewording in Item 5. Confidential items were agreed. The minutes will be signed by HB when the situation allows.
5. **CEO Report** - PL presented his report, starting with an update on the situation regarding Covid-19.
Covid-19 Update: The Trust has remained open, with support for keyworkers' and vulnerable children at Richard Crosse from the start of lockdown and through the holidays. During the half-term holiday in June, the support was not required and staff were able to take a week's holiday. Weekend provision had been offered but was not required. There was positive feedback from parents and children on the work provided online and teachers kept in regular communication with families. From 1 June, the schools opened for N, R, Y1 and Y6 children, with staff continuing to remain in touch with and providing work for children not in school. Staff decided it was best for the schools to re-open on 1 June, although this was a holiday week for TSSMAT, as they thought it was best for the pupils. Extensive risk assessments had been undertaken and staff were happy to return; PL thanked the staff for all their support and hard work in setting up the schools for the return of pupils. The numbers of pupils attending the schools are rising day by day and the Trust is doing everything to ensure that children and staff are safe. All the safety procedures are detailed online. At three schools there has been 100% take-up of places in Y6 and at RC this has meant having 2 groups of children. As there are spaces in different year groups, part-time places have been offered to Y5 and to other year groups. Children have been very happy to return to school and many parents considered that the benefits of returning to school far outweighed the risks. Each

group is taught by a teacher and a TA. However PL said that with the present social distances in place, it would not be possible for all the children to return to school in September, due to a lack of space.

In response to a question from MHC, PL confirmed that all staff were in school; those with childcare issues had been offered flexible working hours. The hours for the group of keyworkers' and vulnerable children at Richard Crosse were 7.30am - 6pm, offering wrap-around childcare. CHo considered that it was wonderful to see children back at school and although the online teaching had been good, it was no substitute for face-to-face teaching and for children to see their friends. He was delighted with the way the Trust had handled the Covid-19 situation. CBS agreed, saying that parents he had talked to and children he saw at school were very happy with the arrangements. CBS said some parents had reported that there was not enough feedback on the online work done by pupils; PL said it was difficult for teachers to give feedback on all the pieces of work carried out by the children, but he would look into this and the priority is to improve the Trust's IT capability.

PL advised Members and Directors that on their return to school in September pupils will be assessed in the key subjects and, if it is decided that some children need to catch up on work missed, there will be a programme of work put in place for them; this may involve booster sessions within school time or after school. It has recently been announced that government money will be available to pay for extra tuition needed. However, it was agreed that summer schools and lessons during the holidays were not a feasible option, as staff need their holidays, particularly after working so hard during the Covid-19 outbreak. HB considered that all those children not in school were disadvantaged. PL stated that the priorities for children returning to school were firstly to address mental health issues and provide structure and then to concentrate on the academic work. HB wished to give a special thank-you to the CEO and all the staff for all their hard work, saying that she had received excellent feedback from parents. It was agreed that HB would write a letter of thanks to staff on behalf of the Board.

HB asked whether keyworkers' children will be taught over the summer holidays and PL said that this was being considered in case there was a demand for this; staff were being canvassed on the possibility of working in a care club setting for additional wages, with children bringing a packed lunch (at present a subsidised school lunch is provided for those who do not receive free meals). Members of the SLT would be on call on a weekly rota.

Staffing: *Confidential Item.*

Priorities: Middle and senior leadership is being trained up, with middle leaders on courses and two headteachers on NPQH courses. The system of curriculum champions is working well.

Improvement of IT is a priority, with an emphasis on improving broadband and connectivity. PL is applying for funding through a DfE rural connectivity programme, with tenders being obtained to improve the system at TH. At the moment Staffs Tech is putting in new lines at TH and broadband is being paid for on a monthly basis. PH agreed that there was a need to upgrade in all the schools, including rewiring and increasing the Wifi speed.

PL stated that one outcome of the Covid-19 epidemic is the greater use of technology; this is now in use for virtual meetings and the Trust wishes to use Google Classroom more. PL would like every child in KS2 to have a Chromebook which could be used at home and in school. Parents could use a 'lease to buy' scheme to buy one for their child; the cost is around £279 each, with monthly payments ranging from £9.70 for a 36-month contract to £25.15 for a 12-month contract.

Confidential Item. PL considered that this would revolutionise the classroom. MHC said that the Hart School may be able to help in sourcing Chromebooks at a reasonable price and she thought the scheme could be offered throughout the school. Parents should ensure that the machines are charged up each night at home. PH advised that there were safeguarding elements, and children should not bring their own devices into school. CBS mentioned the possibility of theft and PL said that the leasing scheme included insurance covering theft. CH was concerned about data protection issues and the Data Protection Officer would be looking into these; CH advised that a Data Protection Assessment should take place and the DPO should work with the SLT to complete the

form. PL suggested that a small working party should be formed to act on this, with a view to it starting as soon as possible. There was broad agreement amongst Members and Directors to approve this, with CHO saying that IT skills should be encouraged. The FAR committee will meet to consider this.

Premises - TSSMAT is still awaiting the outcome of the CIF bids. PL would like to see the fencing and security at TH improved and this will be considered by the FAR committee. The successful SALIX bid has enabled the improvement of lighting at SM. PL considers that work should be done on improving the decoration in certain schools.

6. **MAT growth** - As a result of the present Covid-19 epidemic, there was not much to report on MAT growth as schools had not approached TSSMAT and PL had been unable to go out to visit schools. PL reported that TCaF funding was available for mid-size Trusts to enable them to develop and strengthen, with closing dates of 31.7.20 and 31.12.20. DG offered to help with an application and considered that TSSMAT should consider DfE funding to take on failing schools, as well as TCaF funding. He asked for details about PL and HB's meeting with the RSC and PL confirmed that they had been impressed by the work of TSSMAT with limited resources, but they felt that the size of TSSMAT made it vulnerable.

Name of Trust - Members formally approved the Directors' decision to rename TSSMAT The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust and this was unanimously agreed by all present. PL will inform Companies' House, contacts and suppliers and signage will be changed.

7. **Finance** - DD and SC joined the Google Meet to present the financial report.

Management Accounts - DD presented the Management Accounts, *Confidential Item*. DD talked through the KPIs of pupil numbers and teacher costs per pupil and asked what KPIs the Directors wished to have information on in future; CBS agreed that the two KPIs mentioned were important and said that once the balanced scorecard was in use it would be easier to identify KPIs. PH commented on the teacher costs as a percentage of total income which had been in the range of 80%; however it was felt that the present figure of 66% was misleading, although some reduction could be due to additional income and reduced staffing and management costs. The FAR committee will look into this

Cash Flow - *Confidential Item*

Budget - *Confidential Item*. The budget assumes similar levels of Pupil Premium and EY funding, Care Club and other income, present staffing, increases in pay scales, promotions, cost of living increase, non-staffing costs and present management costs.

Three-year budget - *Confidential Item* CBS asked about the ESFA contribution to pay increases and CHO enquired about pension contributions. CH warned that there could be a major increase in teacher pay, particularly at the bottom end. CHO advised that there had been no increase in school funding for many years. CH thanked DD and SC for the overview narrative which made the accounts easier to understand.

8. **Registers and Card Expenses** - CB will come into school to reconcile the Credit Card expenses. AH will put a copy of the Risk Register on the Shared Drive.
9. **Score Card** - CBS said he was aware that teachers and HT are very busy at present, dealing with the Covid-19 situation, and he will await PL' s guidance before taking this further.
10. **Safeguarding** - During the Covid-19 period, all staff have received Safeguarding training. Those pupils considered to be at risk or vulnerable have been invited to return to school. If they have not come back to school, they are being carefully monitored.
11. **Policy Updates** - The following policies had been sent out to Directors to review:
RE (individual schools), Collective Worship (Church Schools), Teaching and Learning. These policies were all ratified by Directors. The policy on Tendering and Procurement had been sent out to Directors, but there may be some changes and it was not ratified at this time. CBS thanked JB for attaching a new front page to the policies, showing provenance.
A Job Description for the Data Protection Officer role (to be reviewed annually) had been sent to Directors as part of the DPO Action Plan; Directors wished to consider this further and will review it at the next meeting.

12. **Health and Safety** - PL advised that risk assessments had been updated to cover the Covid-19 epidemic and he thanked CBS for sourcing visitors from John Taylor School.
13. **Any Other Business** - As there are no SATs results to report on in July and the 3-year budget had been discussed at this meeting, there was no need for Members to attend the July meeting with Directors. Directors wished to have the meeting on 10 July to discuss plans for September. This meeting will take place via Google Meet.
- PL asked Members and Directors to confirm which day they preferred for meetings next year and the general consensus was Friday, with the option of individuals joining by Google Meet if more appropriate. AH will circulate proposed dates.
- PL advised Members and Directors that there will be some sort of arrangement for the Y6 Leavers to celebrate at the end of term. There has been a whole Trust virtual Act of Worship and it is planned to invite families of children who are not in school to another Act of Worship in the future. CHo thanked all the staff for the great work carried out during the Covid-19 outbreak, he congratulated everyone in the Trust for handling the situation really well and wished everyone the best.

Date of next meeting –

Directors meeting:

10 July 9am via Google Meet

Signed.....

Colin Hopkins - Chair of Members

Date

Signed.....

Heather Bowman – Chair of Directors

Date

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
5	Write letter to Trust staff, thanking them for all their hard work during Covid-19 epidemic	HB	10/7/20
5	Set up a working party to look into the purchase of Chromebooks	PL/FAR committee	10/7/20
5	Improve security and fencing at TH	FAR committee	10/7/20
6	Inform Companies House, suppliers, contacts of change of Trust name	PL	1/9/20
7	Review teacher costs as percentage of income	FAR committee	10/7/20
8	Review Credit Card expenses	CBS	26/6/20
11	Review DPO Job Description	Directors	10/7/20
13	Send list of dates for Directors' and Members' meetings 2020-21	AH	10/7/20