

Minutes of Members' and Directors' Meeting 4 March 2022 8am at Richard Crosse School and via Google Meet

Attendees : Mrs C Gethin (CG) (CEO and Director), Mr C Hopkins (CHo) (Chair of Members), Rev J Brading (JB) (Member), Rev S Davis (SD) (Member), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mr K Borg (KB) (Director), Mr C Bradshaw-Smith (CBS) (Director), Mrs A Burns (AB) (Director), Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Ms S Cole (SCo) (Finance Manager), Mrs J Bowman (JBo) (Data Protection Officer, Business Operations Manager)

Clerk: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse

SM: St Mary's

TH: The Howard

AS: Anson School

SENDCO: Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator

PTFA: Association of Parents, Teachers and Friends of the School

PAN: Planned admission number

1. **Welcome, Prayer, Introductions** - CHo welcomed everyone to the meeting. JB led the Members and Directors in the prayer. Introductions were made for the benefit of Members and Directors who had recently joined.
2. **Apologies** - Apologies had been received from Mr D Grever (DG) (Member) and Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors). AH will update the attendance register.
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - There were no changes to the Pecuniary Interest Register. AB will make her declaration of Pecuniary Interests when she is able to do so on Google.
4. **Minutes of last meetings** - The minutes of the AGM were agreed as a true copy by Members (these had already been agreed by Directors) and were signed by CHo. The minutes of the Directors' meeting held on 11.2.22 were agreed as a true copy by Directors and these were signed by HB. Confidential items will be deleted from the public minutes. Actions relating to the minutes were included in the CEO Report to be discussed at the meeting.
5. **CEO Report** - CG's report had been sent out to Members and Directors; she asked for questions on the report but there were no initial questions.

With regards to Actions from previous meetings, KB reported that he had met with the HT of AS and will now meet up with the Chair of the PTFA to work together to discuss options. A meeting to discuss KPIs has been arranged on 24 March. CG will circulate a list of dates for Directors to visit schools. JBo confirmed to PH that a teacher had used the Chromebook and said it was fine, so JBo will go ahead with the ordering. Arrangements are in hand to recruit a new SENDCO, with the production of the job description; CG said that the new post will start in September and the present SENDCO/HT at RC will supervise the transition and initially line manage the appointee. PH noted how excellent the present SENDCO has been in the role. PH will resend the link for Directors to update security on their IT devices. CBS confirmed that he had met with JBo to discuss the SEN policy.

Members and Directors approved the continued contract for the performance management tool Perspective and also to continue with the contract with the present website provider. There was discussion on the Asset Management System and it was agreed that this was an area which needed to be reviewed in stages:

- 1) to have up-to-date surveys on all four schools. This will involve considerable expense, but was considered necessary. Entrust will be asked to provide a quote; AH will provide details of the surveyor who recently completed surveys of Kings Bromley Almshouses. SD recommended quinquennial surveys and a rolling programme of repairs. JBo confirmed that the MAT complies with a rolling programme of repairs, but this is mainly to do with internal repairs and requirements,

rather than the external structure of the schools. KB asked whether other Trusts might be able to provide details of surveys undertaken.

2) to review policies on this

3) to improve the Asset Management System over time, with possibly the appointment of an estates manager in future, after consideration of the costs involved.

CH said that, with regards to policies, it would be worth reviewing the policies and 5-year asset management plan established at the time of transfer to a MAT.

CHo asked whether there was a sinking fund in place for capital works. This could be a central fund for the MAT, with priorities for building works, or CG suggested that each school could put aside an amount each year for capital works, ICT replacements etc. JBo considered that applications for CIF funding were more likely to be considered if there was an up-to-date survey in place.

CH thought that the costs of a survey for every school could be too prohibitive in one year and it was perhaps worthwhile waiting to survey one or two schools until April 2023 for changes within Staffordshire County Council and Entrust to take place. SD considered that AS was fairly up to date with regards to repairs on the fabric of the school. CHo queried the amount of money held by the Richard Crosse Trust and HB and JB confirmed that this was under discussion at present, but that it was definitely within the remit of the Richard Crosse Trustees to look at giving financial assistance for structural repairs at The Richard Crosse School. JB asked whether The Richard Crosse School was a Listed Building and it was thought to be Grade 2 Listed.

6. **Finance** - SCo reported on Period 6 Management Accounts up to the end of February, saying there had been a good improvement at this point half-way through the financial year. Accounts showed a surplus of around £23k, ahead of budget by £19k. RC and AS have deficits but these have been budgeted for. With regards to the outturn, the surplus is projected to be around £45k at the year end. HTs are now scaling back on spending and making better financial decisions. The income overall is £30k more than budgeted; TH has received £13k in SEN funding, and catering and Care Club income is ahead of budget. CBS asked whether this increase in pupils taking school dinners and attending Care Club is likely to continue and SCo thought that it would; CG pointed out that provision given by Care Club is excellent and HB praised the flexible arrangements it allows. Money has been received for Senior Mental Health Lead Training and some free training has also been given. Total staff costs are £8k under budget, but TA staff costs are over budget due to additional hours. Support staff will be given a 1.75% increase, backdated to 1 April 2021, but this has been budgeted for. Non-staff costs are over budget by £19k, but there is now less expenditure on these items. £44k has been spent on ICT purchases, with a further £36k still to be spent. Total reserves stand at £290k.

There is a cash balance of around £409k, which will reduce to around £304k by the end of March. SCo was thanked for her report.

With regards to the School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT), SC discussed this with Members and Directors, pointing out specific points of action. Directors were happy with this and agreed that it should be submitted.

7. **Trust Growth** - CG reported that she and HB will making two presentations during the following week to a Federation of schools and a Junior School interested in joining TSSMAT. There is another school which may wish to express an interest after Easter; Members and Directors suggested other schools, with CHo expressing the view that a government White Paper to be announced shortly may be looking to encourage the formation of larger Trusts. CG agreed that there had been a review of TSSMAT's strategy of approaching schools to join the Trust and she was happy to work together with other small Trusts. CHo considered that TSSMAT did not have the capacity at present to take on failing schools, but this might change as the Trust expanded. Members and Directors agreed that TSSMAT was working from a position of strength, as the best performing MAT (amongst similar MATs) for attainment in the country in 2019.
8. **Premises** - This had been discussed as part of the Asset Management System.
9. **Admissions** - CBS asked about the numbers at RC; CG explained that this included Nursery numbers and the PAN referred to the intake each year, but pupils could join during the year or after appeal.

Numbers of pupils at TH and SM were very good; a large number of pupils at SM attend from out of catchment area. CHo pointed out that the development of a new school in Rugeley could affect SM numbers and CG agreed that this should be put on the Risk Register.

10. **Safeguarding** - There were no questions. It was confirmed that MHC had checked the Safeguarding records.
11. **Health & Safety** - SCo had sent copies of the Health and Safety reports for the four schools to Members and Directors; there was nothing significant to report, but SCo said that the amount of detail in the reports depended on the inspector. CBS suggested that SCo discuss this with the company doing the inspections, as Directors wanted to ensure that all the inspections were conducted to the same high standard. An issue with water testing at TH had arisen, due to a change in staffing at the school, and it was agreed that HTs should monitor this.
12. **DP Risk Register** - There were no changes to this.
13. **Policy Updates** - There were no policy updates to review.
14. **Any Other Business** - KB informed Members and Directors that he had been looking at the origins of TH and it was agreed with CG that it was important to retain the heritage and traditions of each school, being aware of the school's history. KB stated that, in addition to this, it was important to learn lessons from the recent pandemic and to have contingencies in place. CG agreed that there were new ways of working, particularly with remote learning. CHo asked about a Disaster Recovery Plan, in case of a major incident, and CG confirmed that this had been reviewed in the Autumn term; it was important to ensure that data was kept off-site, but the most important aspect was to ensure protection of the children and staff. CHo asked how the Trust was dealing with the present situation in Ukraine; CG replied that the Trust was following the advice given by the DfE, with a focus on fundraising for displaced people.

Dates of meetings 2021-2022:

Directors

13th May 2022

17th June 2022 (with Members)

8th July 2022

FAR Committee

6th May 2022

Members

17th June 2022

LAG

7th March 2022 (SM)

20th June 2022 (TH)

Signed.....

Date

Heather Bowman - Chair of Directors

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
5	Circulate list for visits of schools by Directors	CG	13/5/22
5	Resend link to update security of IT devices	PH	13/5/22
5	Obtain quotes for buildings surveys	AH/JBo	13/5/22