

## Minutes of Directors' Meeting 15 March 2019 8am

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs A Hodgson (AHod) (Director of Business Operations), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director), Mr G Wood (GW) (Director).

Also Mr Chris Whiting (CW) (Accountant) for Item 5

Clerk: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse

SM: St Mary's

TH: The Howard

PAN: Planned Admission Number

SENCO: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

1. **Prayer** - PL started the meeting with a prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director). AH will update the attendance register.
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - There were no changes to be made to the Register of Pecuniary Interests.
4. **Minutes of last meeting** - The minutes of the Directors' meeting held on 1.2.19 were agreed as a true copy; these were signed by HB. Confidential items were identified. The minutes of the Members'/Directors' meeting of 6.3.19 were also reviewed and agreed by those Directors present.
5. **Finance** - Chris Whiting presented the summary of accounts showing the year to date at the end of February. The income of £830,000 did not include the CIF money and showed a positive variance on the budget of £62,000. Staffing costs also showed a positive variance of £4,000. Although the CEO reduced his hours, SENCO hours have been increased and there have been extra staff costs. There is an overall surplus at present of £23,000 with a positive variance on budget of £51,000, explained by extra monies received through the start-up grant for Anson, a donation from RC Trustees and additional amounts from the government. The finances are very much as budgeted for the year, showing a small amount of around £792 down on budget. Directors agreed that there had been more income than expected and the MAT is in a good position.

CW went on to present the forecasts, explaining that the RC Trustees' money will be spent on refurbishment and the start-up grant for Anson will be spent on legal fees; the remaining £17,000 positive variance on budget is due to additional government money. HB wished to see more detail on payments received by staff for outside training and CW showed the detailed lines giving more information on this. Directors agreed with PL that the monthly reporting of accounts and ability to drill down to the underlying figures were much improved. CW was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting. CH asked that staff names be removed from the accounting reports.

AHod then reported on the remaining Finance items. She confirmed that the appointment of PKF Cooper Perry as auditors was agreed unanimously by those present at the meeting on 6.3.19; she felt it was a good choice and the company would provide valuable support to the MAT.

- With regards to payment for trips, there was around £628 underpaid and Directors agreed that, as this is a voluntary payment and pupils cannot be excluded from trips for curriculum purposes, there should be a contingency amount included when setting the budget to cover any shortfall. MHC will ask whether SM PTA will cover shortfalls, otherwise the Colton Trust will be approached; RC Trustees will be asked to consider paying these amounts and PL will ask the Headteacher at TH to raise this matter with the school PTA. LAG members could be canvassed for their opinions on this.

- Directors were shown a list of bad debts, in many cases this was due to parents of children at Care Club during the summer term, who then moved on to secondary school, not paying outstanding amounts. It was agreed that, as many of these were historical debts from 2016 onwards, these should be written off. AHod confirmed that there was now a much tighter arrangement regarding debts. There was a particular problem with one family owing money and Directors agreed that this case should be taken to the small claims court.
- AHod asked that the BACs limits for payroll be increased, as Anson will be joining the MAT and it was agreed to increase the amount from £115,000 to £150,000. Permission was also given to raise the supplier limit to £40,000 every 3 days. In reply to PH, AHod confirmed the security arrangements for signing off payroll and payments to suppliers.
- AHod presented the proposed Charges and Remissions for September 2019 onwards and Directors agreed a 3% increase for charges for school dinners, nursery wrap-around care and Care Club. The charge for the MAT Choir will be increased from £30 pa to £45 pa, but this will now include dance, drama, stage and props. PL gave advance notice to Directors of a show by TSSMAT at the Red Rose Theatre in Rugeley on 13 June 2020.
- Amendments to the Risk Register, including continuity plans and the joining of Anson to the MAT, were agreed; future cuts were highlighted as a red item. The register will be emailed out to Directors.
- GW agreed to review the Business Charge Card expenses at the end of the meeting.

AHod was thanked for all her hard work.

6. **Trust Growth** - PL said that the conversion process for Anson to join TSSMAT was going well and solicitors are working on the final stages, including leases. Clarification is being sought on the actual budget figures. PH asked about IT connectivity and PL said that this would not happen straight away but should be organised next term. GW enquired about a Member's comments on taking on struggling schools in future and it was agreed that it was important to embed Anson first, as the school will be operating differently within the MAT. Directors agreed that the MAT should build up capacity and then look into whether the DfE would financially support taking on a struggling school in future. There was a consensus of opinion that the vision, values and ethos of TSSMAT, particularly in regards to small schools, were paramount and that the MAT will grow naturally as schools choose to join TSSMAT because of this core mission.
7. **Premises** - CIF bids have been put in for heating, security and roofing. The CIF money at RC and SM has enabled further work to be done in these schools, e.g. decoration and refurbishment. PL acknowledged the help given by Entrust in constructing the CIF bids. At a recent LAG meeting, concern was raised about the decrease in green space at RC, but PL plans to make garden areas for use by the pupils once the building work is completed.
8. **Governance** - PL informed Directors that Mr Hopkins will continue as a Member but will be standing down as a Director. The 4-year term of office for most Directors will come to an end this summer; HB, PH, MHC, CH and SC have confirmed that they will continue for a further two years, but GW will stand down. JS has a further year of office. Directors are asked to consider possible replacements for the two vacant places on the Board; financial and legal skill sets would be welcomed.
9. **Admissions** - It has been decided to accept rising 3-year olds in Nursery. Numbers for September still have to be confirmed, but are looking to be lower than the PAN. Directors considered that there could be more advertising of the school and it was suggested that messages on Facebook should come from the TSSMAT administration.
10. **Safeguarding** - PL gave Safeguarding training updates to Directors and it was agreed that the Safeguarding booklet should be sent out to Directors and Members to read. CH will give further safeguarding training at the Directors' meeting in June.
11. **Health and Safety** - There were no Health and Safety issues.
12. **GDPR** - The report had been received and noted by Directors.
13. **Policy Updates** - Directors ratified policies on Attendance, Data Protection and SEN. The Performance Management policy was ratified and will be further updated in September. With

regards to the Food and Packed Lunch policies, there was discussion on the issue of sweets in school (given by parents on children's birthdays, Easter eggs etc); Directors advocated a common sense approach to this. PL was sorry to inform Directors that the Catering Officer is leaving the MAT. CH raised the issue of Support staff pay as an increase is due on 1 April 2019, but there are problems with County and Stoke pay roll; it was agreed that a letter should be sent to Stoke pay roll to advise them that TSSMAT wishes them to implement the pay increase from 1.4.19. If this is not done, the support staff will received backdated pay when the issues are resolved.

14. **Any Other Business** - There was further discussion on holiday dates 2020-21 and whether to finish the summer term on Friday 16 July or Wednesday 21st July 2021. CH advised that PL should look at the teaching time and confirm whether the teaching staff are working more than required (with a longer school day). Anson will adopt TSSMAT term dates and CH suggested that the hours of the Anson teaching day are reviewed.

With regards to meetings, Directors are invited to an extra meeting to discuss and confirm the budget on Wednesday 10 April, 4-6pm. The Directors' meeting on 12 July is on the same morning as the Leavers Service at RC and it was decided to hold a joint Members'/Directors' meeting on Friday 5 July starting at 8am (the Members' meeting on 3 July will not now take place).

HB informed Directors that they could join in with a clay project as part of the new cross to be presented by Mr Bowman, working with children on 10 and 11 June.

PH advised that it had been hoped to change connectivity contracts this April, but the present contracts do not end until this autumn. The move to Staffs Tech Ltd for computer support has gone well and they will be looking into cloud storage for school data.

#### **Dates of next meetings –**

(Directors' and Members' Meetings are held at Richard Crosse)

##### Directors meetings

Weds 10 April 4pm - 6pm - Budget meeting

10 May 8am

14 June 8am

5 July (with Members) (please note new date: see Item 14 above) 8am

##### Members meetings

5 July (with Directors) (please note new date: see Item 14 above) 8am

##### LAG meetings

1 July 4pm at SM

Signed..... Date .....

Heather Bowman – Chair of Directors

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Action by whom</b>	<b>Action by when</b>
5	Staff names not to be included in finance reports	AHod	from 15/3/19
5	To approach SM PTA/Colton Trust, RC Trustees and HT at TH regarding covering trip non-payments	MHC/PL	10/5/19
5	Email Risk Register to Directors with Minutes	AH	10/5/19
8	Consider possible replacements for 2 vacant places on Board	Directors	10/5/19
10	Send out KCSIE (Safeguarding) booklet to Directors/Members and ask them to sign once read.	JB/AH/Directors and Members	10/5/19
10	Safeguarding training to be on June meeting agenda	AH/CH	14/6/19
13	A letter to be sent to Stoke payroll asking them to implement Support staff pay rises.	PL/AHod	10/5/19
14	Calculate teaching hours in TSSMAT and length of school day at Anson	PL	10/5/19
14	Note changes to meeting dates: Budget meeting on 10/4/19 and change of date of Directors and Members meetings to 5/7/19	Directors/ Members	10/4/19 5/7/19
14	Invitation to take part in clay project at RC	Directors	10 and 11/6/19