



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BD) AND LOCAL GOVERNORS OF THE RURAL CHURCH SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST (RCSAT) HELD REMOTELY ON 23rd NOVEMBER 2020
(Commenced 4pm)

Directors in Attendance:

P Bostock	(PB)	Chair of Board of Directors
A James	(AJ)	
S Loughlin	(SL)	
A Platt	(AP)	

Local Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

T Boote	(TB)	
B Brockbank	(BB)	
I Burnley	(IB)	
A Tomlinson	(AT)	Arrived 4.25pm
S Waddington	(SW)	

Also in Attendance:

N Badger	(NB)	Acting Executive Headteacher
A Goodwin	(AG)	St Oswald's Worlestone School Principal
K Appleby	(KA)	Left 4.30pm Warmingham School Principal
H Cummings	(Clerk)	Clerk

PART ONE**Welcome and Prayer****1. APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) ITEMS**

Apologies were received and accepted from Directors H Spencer (HS) and A Denton (AD).

The Chair welcomed Tim Boote, as a newly appointed Local Governor.

2 items of additional business were noted for part 2 of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT

No potential pecuniary interests or conflicts of interest were declared in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting.

General declarations of interest were recorded on GovernorHub.

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It was noted that most governors had accepted the Code of Conduct on GH.

ACTION: Clerk to contact any governors yet to complete the Declaration of Interests or Code of Conduct.

3. PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2020 were agreed as a true record. In light of the ongoing need for remote meetings, the Chair would review the best way for minutes to be 'signed'.

There were no matters arising from the minutes. That were not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Governors noted the following changes to the Local Advisory Committees:

- Philip Goggin resigned 31/8/20 on his retirement from the Parish.
- Ian Rutter resigned September 2020.
- Lucy Munro resigned October 2020.
- Fiona Todd retired as EHT October 2020.

Governors welcomed the appointment of Tim Boote as a Local Governor for St Oswald's school.

Question: When will Fiona Todd's retirement become public knowledge?

Response: Her retirement took effect from 31st October, and letters have gone to all staff and governors, so it fine for the news to be shared with the children and parents.

ACTION: NB to send a letter to all parents across the trust.

ACTION: School Principals to inform the pupils as appropriate.

5. PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Part one minutes of committee meetings not previously received;

The minutes from all the autumn term committee meetings had been uploaded to GovernorHub for review prior to the meeting. The following updates were received:

Finance

PB reported that the committee had received the annual accounts from Afford Bond. No issues had been raised and the accounts showed the trust to be in a solid financial position. Governors wished to note their thanks to the Principals and the Business Manager for their excellent financial management in keeping budgets on track during a very difficult time.

Governors heard that all pay decisions had been reviewed and approved.

Estates

PB reported that the CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) bid to replace the flat roofs at Bunbury had been successful. Work would start in January, and was scheduled to last for 10 weeks.

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A priority for the coming year would be to look at overcrowding, particularly at St Oswald's. It was hoped to get planning permission for any work, before putting the CIF bid in, and the overcrowding would need to be evidenced.

Pastoral

AJ noted that the trust had been fortunate to date, with no positive Covid tests, and attendance had been very good. The letter, stating the Trust's priorities for the coming months and previously agreed, had been sent to the Secretary of State for Education along with OfSTED and Cheshire East. Governors were pleased to note that the Trust's emphasis on emotional wellbeing and mental health, was now being echoed by OfSTED.

Governors had also received a detailed report from the Pastoral Manager.

Achievement

SL reported that it had been a positive meeting, and while the emphasis was on wellbeing, governors were still engaged in monitoring standards. Plans for remote learning had been reviewed, along with details of how the Coronavirus Catch-up Premium would be used in each school (See Item 6 – EHT report)

- b) There were no other reports from committees.
- c) There were no recommendations requiring the approval of the board of governors.
- d) Reports from governors with special responsibilities:

Health & Safety

While school visits were not possible, PB continued to monitor Health and Safety through reports submitted to the Estates committee. Bunbury had been subject a H&S inspection on 23/11, and the report would be uploaded to GH when available.

Safeguarding

SL had met remotely with the Pastoral Manager, to follow up on her report to the Pastoral committee. School visits were planned for when the lockdown ended, starting with Warmingham.

SEND

SEND would be reviewed as part of the EHT's report on the School development Plan.

GDPR

BB confirmed that most governors had completed the training as requested, and had informed JJ.

ACTION: JJ to chase up any governors yet to complete GDPR training.

The Clerk noted that boards are required to have a link governor for Careers Education & Guidance. SW was approved as the link governor.

6. PART ONE EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER'S (EHT) REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

The EHT had circulated a comprehensive report, for review prior to the meeting, and highlighted the following areas:

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Response to the pandemic

The focus on staff wellbeing was continuing, with particular emphasis on communication and ensuring that staff were involved in decisions. It was agreed that this was paramount and the recent health & safety inspection had also stressed the importance of looking after staff and SLT wellbeing. While staff were felt to be generally positive, the longevity of the current situation was agreed to be taking its toll. This was exacerbated by the lockdown rules which prevented staff from socialising or undertaking the activities they would usually do to de-stress. NB noted that SLT had been trying reduce the pressure on staff by keeping meetings to a minimum and monitoring more remotely.

Question (to AT): How is the mood among staff at the moment?

Response: There has been some anxiety, particularly over the summer, but everyone feels well supported by SLT and governors, and is generally positive. Staff get on with the extra tasks in their areas, and it can be quite lonely, particularly with no pressure valve outside work, but generally we try not to think too long-term.

AT noted that a staff council meeting was scheduled for 2nd December, after which she would feedback to NB.

The Chair requested that AT assure staff of governors' full support, and noted that staff should certainly say if there was anything they needed.

Remote Learning

The Remote Learning policy had been in place by mid-September, and had been implemented effectively for a short time at Warmingahm. Staff were now being offered a second round of training in Google Classrooms to extend their knowledge, including specific training in using it with 4 & 5 year olds.

The children had also been trained to use Google classrooms and were all using it for 1 session per week in school, so they do not forget.

Covid Catch-up Premium

Bunbury was using the funding to employ an NQT to work mainly in Year 3, where the greatest need had been identified. However, it also meant she was available to cover classes should the need arise.

Warmingham had conducted emotional wellbeing screening and was using the funds to support children identified as requiring additional support. It was hoped to use some of the funding for the "Pathways to Progress" literacy programme, and possibly to extend the contract of an NQT, but it was acknowledged that it was a small amount of money.

St Oswald's had identified Year 5 as an area of need, following baseline assessments, and were using the funds to cover an additional 6 hours of TA time for extra interventions and small group work.

The Chair thanked the EHT for her report and praised the excellent work that had been done across the trust in recent months. It was felt that senior leaders had been well prepared for every stage and had managed the ever-changing situation with great skill and compassion. Governors noted that the wellbeing of the EHT and other members of SLT would continue to be their top priority.

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7. GOVERNOR MONITORING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

a) Report from the Training Liaison Governor:

SL had sent out the training schedules for both Cheshire East and the Diocese. It was noted that the training offered by the Diocese was focused mainly on the church school side of things, such as the SIAMs inspections.

GDPR training had been completed as noted in item 5 above.

SL reminded governors that the trust currently paid for Gold membership of the NGA which gave access to further online training modules. The membership would be reviewed in coming months.

b) Governor Monitoring Visit Reports

PB had circulated a report following his visit in September, and also a governance update which was available on GH.

8. AUTUMN TERM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The report had been circulated earlier in the term and items addressed in committee. The clerk drew governors attention to the news roundups at the end of the report for general information.

9. MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting of the Full Board of Directors and Local Governors was confirmed as **Monday 15th March 2021**. As the meeting was likely to be held virtually, it had been agreed to schedule 3 meetings on the same date as follows:

2pm - Finance & HR Committee
3.30pm - Joint Directors' and Local Governors' meeting
5pm - Directors' meeting

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other part one business.

The meeting moved to Part two.

The meeting closed at 5.25pm

Chair.....Date.....