



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BD) and BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE RURAL CHURCH SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST (RCSAT) HELD REMOTELY ON 13TH JULY 2020
(Commenced 4pm)

Directors in Attendance:

P Bostock	(PB)	Chair of Board of Directors
S Loughlin	(SL)	Arrived 4.45pm
A Platt	(AP)	
A Denton	(AD)	Left 5.15pm
A James	(AJ)	

Local Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

B Brockbank	(BB)
I Burnley	(IB)
L Munro	(LM)
A Tomlinson	(AT)

Also in Attendance:

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

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

a) Apologies were received and accepted from Directors H Spencer (HS) and I Rutter (IR). Apologies were received and accepted from Local Advisory Committee members P Goggin (PG) and Susi Waddington (SW).

No apologies had been received from T Hayward, for this or any committee meeting this term, so JJ would be asked to check that his email address was working properly.

ACTION: JJ to check T Hayward's email address.

b) Two items of additional business were tabled for consideration at the end of the meeting:

- Statement of Intent
- Governor Code of Conduct.

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

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

a) Governors were given opportunity to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the board of governors as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting. The following were declared:

- P Bostock is Trustee of the Heage Windmill Society
- S Loughlin is a Governor of Christ the King School Macclesfield
- I Burnley is a Trustee of the Worleston School House Trust
- L Monro is a Member of the Bunbury Parochial Church Council
- B Brockbank is a Trustee of the Worleston Church House Trust

3. MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to the membership of the Local Advisory Committees, but it was noted that IR was seeking to recruit new governors for Warmingham. A possible candidate from St Oswald's had been identified, although there was concern that this may cause an imbalance in terms of the number of parents from one school. It was agreed to review the situation in September.

ACTION: PB to check progress with IR regarding recruitment of governors from Warmingham.

4. PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

a) The part one minutes of the spring term Board of Directors and Local Governors meeting held on 16th March 2020 were **agreed** as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair when possible.

b) All actions listed on the action log had been completed, with the exception of the GDPR training. **Action c/f**

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

Pastoral

The Committee Chair reported that governors at the meeting had questioned thoroughly and extensively the provision and support for the children, and particularly vulnerable children, during the schools' closure. Jo Cliffe, the SENDCo, had attended the meeting and governors had been reassured that the schools were going beyond the DfE definition of 'vulnerable' to support any children they felt needed it.

Achievement

Governors had reviewed a very comprehensive report from the EHT, and every issue raised had already been addressed. The format of reports to parents for this year had been agreed, using data collected in March.

Question: Could we be challenged by OfSTED for using March data? Or if the data proves inaccurate?

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

Response: No, we have been advised to use data from when the children were last in school, and all schools will be doing the same. Also, it is internal data which OfSTED do not look at.

NB noted that the reports had since been issued, and the feedback from parents at all of the schools had been extremely positive. AT agreed, and commented that staff had received emails from parents thanking them for the clear and simple reports.

NB also noted that the work with children who had returned to school was very encouraging. They wanted to be in school and were keen to learn, and were consequently picking things up very quickly. Rates of progress while at home varied widely; some having fallen back slightly and some having flourished, but all were showing signs that they would 'bounce back' quickly.

Estates

PB reported that work had begun on the Trim Trail at Warmingham, and a number of trees were due to be removed. The CIF bid for work on the flat roof at Bunbury had been rejected, but since further funds had been announced by government, E3Cube were looking to see if the bid might now qualify.

HS had continued her work on the parking and traffic issues at St Oswald's. Mr Wheatley had renewed his offer of land for a car park, and a pre-planning meeting was scheduled to look at whether the proposals would be likely to get permission. The cost of the meeting would be covered by PB and AD. With regard to gritting during the winter, Cheshire East had announced that it was reviewing its routes and would consult with schools.

Finance

The Committee Chair reported that each school's budget had been recommended for approval, and subsequently approved by Directors. Whilst balanced budgets had been agreed for 2020/21, the situation would need to be monitored carefully with deficits forecast in future years. In particular, the committee would be looking at pupil numbers, and AD would be working with NB to formulate a marketing plan.

Governors noted that since the meeting, JJ had submitted a claim for approximately £10.5K across the three schools, for Covid related expenditure.

- 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

PB reported that he had visited all three schools on 16th June, the day after the start of the wider re-opening. He had been fully satisfied with all aspects of H&S and the arrangements in place. One-way systems and zoning were clearly marked, and the drop-off system was working well. A full report was available on GH.

Safeguarding

SL had visited on 12th June and a full report was available on GH.

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

GDPR

BB reminded governors of the need to read the documentation on GH and complete the two GDPR training units. Each unit should take approximately 15 minutes and was informative and useful.

ACTION: All governors to complete training by 31/8/20 and confirm to BB and SL that it has been done. Training also to be logged on GH.

SEND

AJ reported that the Pastoral Committee meeting had taken the place of a SEND review, and committee members were very happy with the arrangements in place to support SEND pupils and their families during the partial school closure.

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:

SEF/SDP – Much of the SDP for 2019/20 had been actioned before the school closures in March, but the work to embed changes had not obviously not taken place. This had now been incorporated into the SDP for 2020/21, specifically under Priority 2, which also included areas highlighted by the OfSTED inspections.

A governor commented that he felt NB had been overly critical in her RAG rating of Bunbury's progress with the SDP, but she responded that she would not feel comfortable to state that an action was complete until it was fully embedded.

Response to the pandemic

NB detailed the Trust's response to the Covid-19 crisis, where the emphasis had been on being fully prepared for each stage. Initially, this was in terms of provision for keyworker children, then from 10th May preparations began to welcome back designated year groups. Governors agreed that a calm and consistent approach, combined with excellent communication, had reassured both staff and parents. A pupil handbook, designed to show the children what to expect and what they needed to do, had subsequently been shared across Cheshire East and the Diocese as an example of good practice.

In the event, the reopening on 15th June was extremely calm and smooth, and NB wished to thank both of the site managers and Jo Jones for their incredibly hard work in preparing the schools for reopening in such difficult circumstances.

In the absence of alternative guidance, the schools had continued with existing themes in their home learning provision, but with a great deal of flexibility in acknowledgement of the varied circumstances of different families. Communication channels between home and school had been established, using email and padlet. From 1st June, the home learning provision had become more formalised to reflect work being done in school, with a structured timetable should parents wish to use it.

Safeguarding had been a high priority throughout, and the report detailed measures taken to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Similarly, there had been continual communication with parents and staff to address any concerns and support staff and pupil wellbeing. Staff had been consistently encouraged to raise any concerns with SLT at any

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

time. Since the reopening, it was felt that the designation of Friday afternoons as PPA time had been very beneficial to staff trying to balance work and home life during the pandemic.

Detailed action plans had already been drawn up for each school's full reopening in September, and these, along with the full risk assessment were available on GH for governors to review.

All schools were required to have a home-learning plan in place by the end of September, should it prove necessary to close a bubble at any point. The Trust had adopted Google Classroom and GTech would set up the online learning platform over the summer break. It was anticipated that everything would be fully in place by the second week in September.

It was unclear whether the Traveller children would return to St Oswald's in September, but contact would be maintained, and efforts made to reassure where necessary.

Governors congratulated NB, KA and AG on their successful handling of the crisis, and thanked them for all of their hard work. It was felt that they had worked really well as a team and their professional, calm approach, and excellent communication had carried staff with them throughout.

7. GOVERNOR MONITORING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

a) Report from the Training Liaison Governor:

All face-to-face training had been suspended during the pandemic. Governors were encouraged to look at the online training available, but to give priority to completing the GDPR units referred to in item 5 above.

b) Governor Monitoring Visit Reports

Reports had been received from SL and PB and were available on GH.

8. SCHOOL POLICIES

All policies were up to date.

9. SUMMER TERM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The report had been circulated earlier in the term and items addressed in committee.

10. MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting of the Full Board of Directors and Local Governors was confirmed as **Monday 23rd November 2020, at 4pm**. The meeting would be held virtually, unless agreed otherwise.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Statement of Intent

AJ informed governors of the decision by Directors to write to the DfE, OfSTED and Cheshire East, to notify them of the Trust's priorities for the coming year. The emphasis would be on pupil wellbeing and addressing gaps in children's knowledge and understanding, rather than results. It was agreed that the letter should be sent on behalf of all governors.

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

Governor Code of Conduct

The NGA Code of Conduct had been uploaded to GH. Governors were asked to read the document and confirm their acceptance of the code by 31st August 2020.

ACTION: All governors to confirm acceptance of the Code of Conduct.

In conclusion, PB encouraged governors to contact the schools to thank staff for their hard work and dedication, and to wish them a good summer break.

AG thanked governors for their contributions to a small, socially-distanced staff celebration at the end of term.

The meeting closed at 5.25pm

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