

Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023 at 8am online via Microsoft Teams

Present		In attendance		Apologies	
Maria Ashurst (Chair of Trustees)	MA	Matthew Symonds (Chief Financial Officer)	MS	Rebecca Evans	RE
Judith Goodchild	JG	Julia Stoneman (Clerk)	JS		
Jane McFall (Vice Chair of Trustees)	JM				
Adrian Massey (Chief Executive)	AM				
Sally Crabb	SC				
Nick Hart	NH				

Acronyms:	
GAG – General Annual Grant	KCSIE – Keeping Children Safe in Education
SRMA – School Resource Management Advisor	RI – Requires Improvement
ESFA – Education and Skills Funding Agency	CIF – Condition Improvement Fund
TES – Times Education Supplement	DFC – Devolved Formula Capital
	LGPS – Local Government Pension Scheme

		Action
1. Welcome and apologies for absence	Apologies were received and accepted from Rebecca Evans.	
2. Opportunity to declare an additional interest	The register of interests had been previously circulated and there were no changes	
3. Minutes of the last meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 th March were taken as a true and accurate record of proceedings.	
4. Any matters arising/action tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SC to do the safeguarding training. b. It was agreed to have the Standards and Education Committee meeting on 4th July at 8am. JM, JG, NH and MA agreed to sit on the committee. 	1 SC
5. Finance update	Trustees confirmed that they had received and read the P8 summary, April 2023. MS went through it and trustees were invited to ask questions. <i>See appendix.</i>	
6. Chief Executive's Report	<p>Trustees had received the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CE Report Spring 2023 b. Data Protection Report to Trustees 3rd May 2023 <p>AM went through the report and trustees were invited to ask questions. From this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>See appendix.</i> b. CIF approvals have been delayed. This makes it difficult to organise contractors to work in the schools over the summer holidays. CIF report to be received at the next meeting, along with the safeguarding update. c. The data protection report is positive with low numbers reported. There were subject access requests that are time consuming to prepare. A trustee asked whether there is a limit and pointed out that if it goes over a number of hours a charge can be made. <i>See appendix.</i> d. Trustees discussed the recent Values Day at St Cleer. It was noted that there was a high level of involvement from the children and deep learning through creativity. A vote of thanks was given to the staff. 	
7. AOB	There was none other business.	
In order to evidence that trustees are providing challenge to the leaders, these questions are highlighted in the minutes		

The meeting was closed at 9.35am

Action Point	Governor/Clerk	Action point to be addressed	When	Action update
Actions from this meeting: 18th May 2023				
1	Sally	Safeguarding training		

Confidential Appendix

The following to be regarded as confidential under Article 125 in the Articles of Association

	Confidential Appendix	Action
5. Finance update	<p><u>P8 Summary Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Year to date, income is favourable and there has been extra income, including pupil premium, mainstream schools grant and teachers' pension and pay grant. b. Staffing is overspent by £90k. £28k of that is supply and this is mainly for Brunel, St Cleer, Wadebridge and Looe. c. The LGPS rate has increased. d. Teachers' pay was £8k overspent. Some teachers have left, and new ones have started back from maternity, so this should lessen over the year. e. Supplies and services were overspent by £134k in the month of April. £102k was used to fund iPads, so ultimately this is from reserves, although it is reported as a loss. f. It is estimated that £20k of stock is carried and at the end of March and £102k of prepayments, such as educational subscriptions and software licences. g. After 7 months a surplus of ~£11.2k was made. The target was £58k. The Trust is £46k behind target but there are adjustments that can be made. which once this is taken off and including the pre-paid supplier invoices and the £20k or £30k of stock the true position is more like a surplus of £100k. h. From April costs will increase, mainly due to the minimum wage. Looking at the year end forecast, reserves of £250k will be used. There will still be over £1 million in reserves, so the Trust will still be ahead of the reserves target. i. A trustee asked whether there is a risk of the additional income being clawed back. MS explained that heads of school will need to log on to the DfE website to confirm that the tutoring grants have been spent. AM will ensure that this happens. A trustee asked whether there is evidence that this has been spent. AM confirmed that the TA hours compared to funding received is easily doubled. j. A trustee asked how the situation compares to other trusts and schools. AM stated that anecdotally everyone is finding it difficult. A trustee asked what the main cause is. AM explained that it is the minimum wage increase for support staff. This is not funded like the teachers' pay award. k. A trustee queried why the long-term teacher absence is in the big schools. AM explained that Brunel and St Cleer are underspent on teacher costs but overspent on supply. They are using supply to take them to year end. Also, the big schools are more likely to know where there is no cover. It can also be that staff in the big schools are less ready to go the extra mile than the staff of small schools. A trustee asked whether it is worthwhile letting the big schools know that this is a trend and that it affects the whole Trust budget. AM stated that it balances out, as the big schools support the small schools, as most of the leads are in the big schools. AM and MA have previously discussed the shorter term absences that do not get insurance cover. There is a trend to take a few days off, whereas in the past this would not have happened, and it could be due to Covid, stress levels and workload. Now that it has been identified it will be monitored in terms of wellbeing issues as well as cost. It was noted that the effects of Covid are still being seen and there is more dysregulated behaviour. l. At the end of term HR will collate absence trends. m. The 2023/24 budget is nearly ready. It has been very tight due to the minimum wage increase. Including on-costs the support staff pay increase is 16%. Meetings were held 	1 Clerk

	<p>with the heads of school, and they have been through temporary and fixed term contracts and tried to ensure that people have time to find other opportunities. This has contributed to anxiety and stress levels, as the heads of school have had to relay this message to the staff.</p> <p>n. A trustee asked how far the budget would be pushed and whether the level of education could become compromised. AM explained that the Trust generally gets more income than predicted. They would not want to squeeze the budget so much that the schools cannot deliver a good education. In terms of the budget a worst case scenario is always assumed.</p> <p>o. It was noted that Flagstone has generated £3k per month and exceeded expectation. A vote of thanks was given to MS.</p>	
<p>6. Chief Executive's Report</p>	<p>a. Trustees had received a paper on proposed reduction on administration hours at Brunel and redundancy timeline. Costs are high as there are 3 full time and 2 part time members of staff. This is not needed as finance is run centrally. Ideally there would be a receptionist and a full-time secretary. This would help to reduce the deficit. A high staff cost was inherited at Brunel. One of the teachers has moved to Pelynt, 2 are on interview and 2 have reduced to part-time. It may be possible to reduce costs in terms of people appointed. If this is not possible a process will begin after half term. The process would offer other opportunities. MS explained that in the current budget it is assumed that they will stay, but the budget is still £7k out and this saving would bring the Trust closer to breaking even. Trustees confirmed that they are happy to support whatever the executive team feels is the best way forward.</p> <p>b. Trustees discussed growth. It is time consuming to cultivate the contacts and not all of them come off. There are less schools coming up in terms of conversion. There are some mergers, but they are bigger players. It is a case of keeping things going and to see how it pans out. Relationships need to be kept up in order to move forward. At the recent Members' meeting there was a suggestion to put deadlines in place for potential Trust partnerships.</p> <p>c. A trustee asked about the comment in the Data Protection Report about resourcing being identified as a gap. AM explained that the DPO is dropping an HR day in order to focus on data protection. This is to ensure that the Trust is up to date with procedures, rather than more time for dealing with requests.</p> <p>d. The head of school appointment at Wadebridge was not successful. An advert had been put in the TES. It may be necessary to pay a recruitment agency. A trustee asked whether an internal recruitment could be made. AM explained that it is a large school and would not be suitable for a first headship. An applicant would need experience of at least a medium school. There is an interim arrangement that is working well currently, so it is not an immediate problem.</p> <p>e. There are people that could be put forward for the Blisland head of school appointment.</p>	